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FACES FOR FORTUNES.

FACES FOR FORTUNES.

BY

AUGUSTUS MAYHEW,

AUTHOR OF "PAVED WITH GOLD," ETC., ETC., ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON :

TINSLEY BROTHERS, 18, CATHERINE ST., STRAND.

1865.

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250. u. 108.

LONDON :
HARRADBY AND EVANS, PRINTERS, WHITEFRIARS.



TO

HENRY VIZETELLY,

A FRIEND OF MANY YEARS,

This Book is Dedicated

BY

THE AUTHOR.

OLD HALL, BEELEY,
January 20th, 1865.

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PREFACE.



THERE is no sound in this world so beautiful as the laughter of women. In the hope of hearing it this book was written.



FACES FOR FORTUNES.

CHAPTER I.

CENEUS was a Thessalian gentleman of high standing, not only in the social circle but especially on his fine legs. Handsome, rich, and light-hearted, he found the world a pleasant place, which amply rewarded him for the exertion of living. He flourished 2000 years ago, in the days when Neptune ruled the waves—before Britannia was fit to accept office.

Ceneus from his earliest infancy had experienced the caprices of fortune. His life combined the extremes of romance with the height of eccentricity.

Nature had not originally intended that Ceneus should wear whiskers and topboots; she had marked him out for hair-pins and flounces. At

his birth, he was declared, by competent authority, to be a lovely girl, and up to his (her) seventeenth year was vastly admired for his (her) modesty, grace, complexion, and back hair. His (her) maiden name was Cœnis.

Cœnis, we learn from the printed report of this extraordinary case, was indebted to Neptune for the strange metamorphosis which made a little man of her. It is also related that before the sea-god emancipated her from petticoatdom, he, in the handsomest manner, made her invulnerable, lest her female acquaintance, mad with envy at her sudden promotion, should attempt his (her) life.

This extraordinary transformation was hailed by the Philosophical Society of the period with transports of the wildest delight. A grand tea-meeting and muffin festival was instantly organised. At last, cried the studious, there was some likelihood of obtaining from a competent authority an explanation of the different emotions which agitate the female mind, and instituting a sound metaphysical comparison between them and the sensations which, ever since man came into

fashion, have played such fearful gooseberry with the masculine bosom.

We are indebted to the deep researches of the ingenious and painstaking Todbusker for the little we know concerning these important investigations. When the high-standing Ceneus was asked what had been the principal subject of his meditations during his earliest girlhood, he at once replied "Marriage!" On being requested to mention the predominating thoughts of his maiden state, he again answered "Marriage!" Enquiry being made as to the fancies and aspirations of his brain when grown to be a fine woman, he unhesitatingly exclaimed "More Marriage!" To quote the words of the learned Todbusker: "This repetition, though monotonous, conduces to reflection."

If we turn to the elaborate studies of that ponderous thinker, De Wagtaille, we find his lights to be confirmatory of the theory propounded by Ceneus. In the eighth volume of his work, "On Woman," we meet with this passage:—"To the ordinary observer a mother toying with her (female) child is but as a hen clucking to its

chick ; but the philosopher, in an instant, detects the business of her mind. As she dances her (female) babe into the air she is calculating the chances of its marriage ; as she points her finger at its dimples to coax the smile, she wonders with whom it will marry ; as she nurses it to sleep on her bosom she reckons how soon the marriage will take place. Maternal love is in such haste to have its hopes confirmed, that before the infant hath left off its long clothes she sees it in bridal array ; before it can walk alone she beholds it clinging to its supporter for life." It may be interesting to add, that De Wagtaille was so strongly opposed to early marriages, that even in his seventy-third year we find him yet single.

In his most sprightly moments, De Wagtaille is but a gloomy writer ; his observations on the ecstatic bliss of wedded life are unwholesomely cold, and his descriptions of home comfort are offensively dismal.

We much prefer to them the lively effusions of the gay and hopeful Spratmirt. His enthusiasm has all the charms of intoxication. In his un-

dying "Woman Considered," he treats of marriage in its mercantile sense. "If *he* be rich," he cries, "what better purchase is there than love? If the wealth be in *her* pocket, then she hath a double security for his affection, through his gratitude and comfort." This passage has been much quoted by the poor of both sexes. Its success was doubtless the occasion of the spiteful addition made to it by the otherwise not unamiable Bungville, who, complaining that the sentence was incomplete, added, "And if neither have substance, then they have both folly, for two must starve on that which was not an existence for one; and if both are wealthy, why marry?" How so conscientious an author as Bungville could stumble into such reckless absurdity must ever be a marvel to the charitable, especially as he is known to have been thrice a bridegroom.

Angry with the fussy grumblers of the Bungville school, we turn from them with impatience. To deprecate that which the entire world approves, because our own experience does not agree with the assertions of the many, may indeed be accepted as a confession of misfortune, but our

opinion is at once deprived of its preponderance. How is it, we would ask those grumpy Bungvilles, —how is it, if marriage is so unpleasant a condition of life, how is it that the judgment of the legislature considers it necessary to restrict man to one helpmate? Man, unrestrained, would rush madly on, and, like the Mormon or the Mussulman, consider his domestic arrangements incomplete, unless, like his tea-things, a dozen made up his service.

To calm our minds let us turn to Dr. Johnson and take a little refreshment. "Sir," he observed to Mr. Boswell (we quote from memory), "marriage is much more necessary to a man than to a woman, for he is much less able to supply himself with domestic comforts. I have often wondered why young women should marry, as they have so much more freedom and so much more attention paid them while unmarried than when married." BOSWELL: "Is not love, to a certain degree, a delusion in us, as well as in woman? I don't know but there is, upon the whole, more misery than happiness produced by that passion." JOHNSON: "I don't think so, Sir." BOSWELL:

"Do you speak from personal experience, Sir?"

JOHNSON (puffing and blowing): "Why, no, Sir. I accept universal experience. I have never hung myself, Sir, but I appreciate its consecution."

We have now reached the great question which inspired us to draw the pen and wade elbow-deep in ink, in defence of woman's trampled rights. Since all wise men proclaim that wedlock increases happiness, why do not our bachelors incline to wisdom and get married? If home comfort cannot be complete without a wife, why do our youths persist in being uncomfortable? Why should single washstands disgrace so many dressing-rooms? Why should the one pillow, the one breakfast-cup, the one dinner-plate, the one arm-chair, render so many habitations contemptible?

Is it difficult to get a wife? Frivolous excuse! We can, even in our small circle of friends, point out twenty families where no reasonable offer would be refused; where gushing love would meet and encourage the timid approach; carriage families, footmen families, opera-box families,

connexions that would be invaluable to suitors in the medical or legal professions.

We could mention fifty heart-rending cases where beauty, talent, and excellent blood have lingered and hoped until the first gray hair has warned them all beauty must *die*; we can remember glorious eyes that flashed fire enough to frighten gun-shy rooks, around which, alas! the crow's foot now has left its mark; we have known fine amiable creatures, whose smile would have illuminated a coal-cellar, who now sit scowling over the selfishness of man; we have danced with lovely beings with little plaything feet in baby *bonbonnière* boots; we have listened to creamy voices whose "Good day" was worth a "brava," and whose singing would charm snakes; we have watched the gilding pencil held by hands so small a watch might have borrowed them: and what remains of all these perfections? Nothing! The feet are large, the voices broken, the hands swollen, and the disappointed spinsters sit crouching by the fire and say it is a bad world, whilst the papas reckon up how much it cost to make their girls attractive, and wish their time had

to come over again and the money were once more in their pockets.

We could, we say, understand these mournful matrimonial statistics, if the maidens of England were deficient in personal attractions,—if, for instance, the poor dear creatures resembled the unpleasant Blemmyes of antiquity, who had no heads, but carried their eyes and mouths in their bosoms; or, indeed, were they afflicted, as were the natives of Abarimon, whose toes grew, most inconveniently, behind their heels; for, to our fancy, neither of these formations is admirable. Or we could account for this adherence to single life if our men were unworthy of love through their ignoble proportions, as was the case with the unfortunate Brotheus, whose deformities were so abominable, that he was disgusted with himself; or more particularly did our males resemble that disagreeable nobleman of dark complexion (mentioned by the Rev. Joseph Wolff, D.D., the celebrated traveller), who, poor man, was afflicted with a tail; “and people of high rank have told me,” says the Doctor of Divinity, “that he and his family were known to have tails; and there-

fore in his carriage there was a hole in the seat where he sat, in order that he might be able to sit comfortably.”*

But how contrary to this is the happy truth. Our women are lovely as Callirrhoe, that fortunate virgin of Calydon, who had ten thousand suitors; they could show faces with the bewildering Aristoclea, whose lovers always killed one another; whilst our men excel even the perfect Tithonus, whom Aurora loved, and Narcissus, had he seen them, need not have looked on the stream. They are the children of valour and strength; they have the brass of a Colossus and can roar like Stentor.

After many sleepless nights passed in the deepest cogitation, we have, we flatter ourselves, discovered the cause of this unwholesome persistence in dogged celibacy. The simple truth is, that we no longer live in the time of the great Samuel Johnson. The world has grown clever since he wrote that the necessity of marriage was

* The Doctor has forgotten to add, what to us is quite as extraordinary, that the affliction was not simply confined to the members of this noble family, but that the estates were also en-tailed.

that man was less able to supply himself with domestic comforts than woman. With poor hard-working fellows the rule still holds good ; but with your young bloods of fortune it is absurd to apply such a pot-and-kettle argument.

Young Tom, the carpenter, takes unto himself a wife that his twelve-o'clock dinner may be hot and waiting for him ; but young Aristo knows that at his club he can taste dishes which no fair Rosamond could concoct. Tom is kindest to his dear when the hearth is clean swept and supper ready ; Aristo would have to renounce his palace and its luxury if Lady Rosamond were queen of his drawing-room.

So long as the gay bachelor had to trust to the ordinary for his food and the tavern for his company, he might well sigh for the comforts of wedlock ; but now he is emancipated from the tyranny of burnt meats and the lonely evening. To cook his dainties Signor Salmi turns back his wristbands,—Signor Salmi, who wears diamond rings and keeps a brougham. The club furniture is richer than even that of my lord (his papa), the servants are more numerous, the library, the

billiard room, the cigars and coffee infinitely superior to anything fair Rosamond could imagine. There is company of the best and most renowned dons, carefully selected as dessert fruit notables without a black ball against their characters. We are more civilized now than when the learned Samuel laid down the law; man can now supply himself with comforts much better than woman, and at such a cheap rate that he shies at a church steeple, and only makes love to tease the girls and pass the time pleasantly.

Then if a wife is no longer a necessity, how can men be made to marry?

Into what a tempest of thought does the contemplation of this subject plunge us. We foresee the end of England, we foretell the break-up of society, and the gradual dying out of a noble people. Soon marriage will be limited to the carpenter Toms, and the clean-hearth people. Poor dear souls connubially inclined will not dare to risk the penalties of the happy state; for what a fearful and disheartening prospect is it for a man to picture himself the father of a dozen fine girls who stick on his hands worse

than warts, because no "charms" can get rid of them. Any man of sensibility must shrink from such an ordeal,—to see these loved beings one by one retreat hopeless and heartbroken from dance and fête, to behold the nose pinched, the once ripe lips that pouted forth as if to meet the kiss half-way, now shrivelled as a raisin; the creamy laugh now cruelly churned from its butter; the lovely shoulders, throat, and figure—all gone! gone!

Such pictures, we insist, are indeed too terrible for the susceptible to contemplate, and well may any man of tenderness refuse to submit his feelings to such prostrating shocks. Therefore, it is clear that the reprehensible selfishness of our young men is not only the cause of their own celibacy, but actually prevents the connubial from gratifying their virtuous impulses; hence it is evident that as marriage is the mother of nations, our population must rapidly decrease, and our proud position as a people be so forfeited that the first ambitious potentate who cares to invade dear England, will only find old men and old maids to grumble at his

victorious progress. Certainly a fearful state of things !

Another extremely forcible argument in favour of all our young men being forced, by fair means or by foul, into changing a five-pound note at Doctors' Commons is, that our commerce and manufactures depend largely upon marriage for their prosperity.

Little children must be clothed. Manchester steps gracefully forward with its sweet little pocket-hanks and pinafores ; Dunstable amiably offers its little bonnet and Coventry its little ribbons ; whilst Spitalfields nobly prepares the Sunday frock of silk. Our ships fly from one end of the world to the other for the life-sustaining arrowroot ; our bakers prepare the salutary tops and bottoms. Brides must be arrayed, wives are fond of becoming garments. Are honest workmen to starve because foolish and obstinate youths prefer to lead the lives of spiders ? Let our drapers and our milliners see to it, and that promptly. We know of no other motive that would justify a civil war. Should a mob of Lancashire operatives, assisted by a

crowd of starving weavers, reinforced by an army of vicious sempstresses, march on London, it is no more than any reasonable political economist ought to expect.

A good doctor has no business to describe the malady, unless he can prescribe the remedy. There is yet time for physic to do its duty. The medicine is simple and pleasant though rather expensive, but warranted to cure. If man can be no longer forced into marriage by his necessities, he may at least be coaxed up the church steps by his pleasures. Chloroform him with enjoyment, and then remove the Adam's rib and make to him a wife. No absurd qualms of conscience should restrain the fond mother from following our advice; the happiness of her daughter should predominate over any reproaches of worldly manœuvring. We but call upon her to speculate wisely for a nett profit of joy, and not to gamble wickedly for big gains of dubious delights.

What matter how peace, comfort, and happiness be smuggled into the home, so that they gain a footing there? We shall be near, to help and

defend the abused parent; we shall be near, to
parry satire and slay with warm invective; for
we have ourself a large family, and our eldest is
thinner than we like to see her—poor girl.

CHAPTER II.

A SHORT ESSAY ON LOVE AND ITS TOKENS, CONTAINING SEVERAL HINTS OF GREAT VALUE.

WE very much doubt if any man who is capable of writing a dictionary could give a proper definition of love : it is not in his nature. We have looked into five or six volumes by eminent lexicographers, and it is with sorrow that we are forced to state, that, from their explanations, they appear to have known nothing about the delightful sensation ; a fact the more to be regretted, because four of them were married men.

Could anybody imagine a writer of dictionaries making love ? Of course not—no more than you can picture up a lawyer writing poetry, or an undertaker feeding a baby, or a butcher keeping a pet lamb from disinterested motives.

Let us, for the fun of the thing, suppose the

great Dr. Johnson paying his addresses to a young lady. All the time he would be studying himself more than her, endeavouring to find out what his feelings were like, and bothering his head as to how he should express them in neat and concise terms, so as to fabricate a new definition in the next edition of his dictionary.

According to the good Doctor (we refer more particularly to the shilling edition of his immortal work), *Love* is a passion, friendship, kindness, or silk stuff. He might just as well have added, a ventriloquist, an apple, or a drink. We should like to see the curious textile fabric he refers to. We have frequently heard of a love of a dress, but never of a dress of love; we have also often known plenty of stuff to be passed off as love, but although it was of a silky nature, still it was not silk. We are at the present moment acquainted with a gentleman who is courting his fourth wife, and as silk dresses enter largely into his ideas of paying his addresses, perhaps his notions about love coincide with the definition of Dr. Johnson.

The Rev. James Barklay, who, thirty years

ago, published an excellent dictionary (with a frontispiece of Britannia listening with great delight to the book being read aloud to her by Science), states that *love* is the ardent desire or passion which is excited at the sight of any object that appears amiable.

We beg to differ from the reverend gentleman, for a friend of ours fell in love with, and was ultimately united to, a young lady, who was, and still is, as unamiable as possible. During his courtship, she invariably snubbed him; indeed, was always saying harsh and unpleasant things. As the donkey loves thistles, so did he this unpleasant lady, for some mysterious and unknown reason. Since their marriage, he has suffered a martyrdom, which began with a struggle for a latchkey, and has ever since been continued up by housekeeping expenses.

Shakspeare, who appears to have known everything from spelling up to metaphysics and moral philosophy, was intimately acquainted with the emotion of love. In the "Two Gentlemen of Verona," he makes Speed give the following diagnosis of the malady:—

“VALENTINE.—Why, how know you that I am in love ?

“SPEED.—Marry, by these special marks: First, you have learned, like Sir Proteus, to wreath your arms like a mal-content; to relish a love song like a Robin-redbreast; to walk alone like one that had the pestilence; to sigh like a school-boy that had lost his A B C; to weep like a young wench that had buried her grandam; to fast like one that takes diet; to watch like one that fears robbing; to speak pining like a beggar at Hallow-mass. You were wont, when you laughed, to crow like a cock; when you walked to walk like one of the lions; when you fasted, it was presently after dinner; when you looked sadly, it was for want of money; and now you are metamorphosed with a mistress, that, when I look on you, I can hardly think you are my master.”

Which means, that lovers are thoughtful, silent, and sentimental: that they prefer solitude and lose their appetites. But these symptoms only declare themselves in very desperate cases, such as when the young lady is possessed of great wealth, and the young gentleman is objected to, because he has not a farthing and is out of employment; or where the damsel is wonderfully beautiful and the youth is spurned because he has had the small-pox twice, and each time been severely marked.

Samuel Daniel, a poet, who wrote in the year 1590, has bequeathed to the world a sweet song

about Love, which is useful as a proof that our forefathers knew nothing about it :—

“ Love is a sickness full of woes
All remedies refusing—
A plant that most with cutting grows,
Most barren with best using !
Why so ?
More we enjoy it, more it dies—
If not enjoyed, it sighing cries
Heigh ho !

“ Love is a torment of the mind,
A tempest everlasting !
And Jove hath made it of a kind,
Not well, nor full, nor lasting—
Why so ?
More we enjoy it, more it dies—
If not enjoyed, it sighing cries
Heigh ho ! ”

We infinitely prefer the theory of love contained in all fairy tales, where, when a fond pair are united, instead of their love decreasing and dying, they “live happily all the days of their life.”

It is rather distressing that we have not been able to give a precise definition of love, because, as it necessarily forms the principal portion of the subject of this chapter, it would have enabled

us to treat the ceremony of presenting its tokens with greater vigour and certainty.

Woman's mission on earth is of course to inspire love, with the ultimate object of getting married. That there are great difficulties to be overcome before this end can be attained, is proved by the lamentable number of spinsters who figure in the census returns. In vain do milliners bring over the latest Parisian fashions—in vain are extra breadths added to the already luxuriant skirt—in vain is the hair worn in a thousand different styles; for neither curiously-cut bodices, nor a figure like a diving-bell, nor hair brushed from the forehead, produce the desired result. This may, in a great measure, be traced to our having allowed some of our ancient customs to die out. That of giving Love Tokens on the 20th August was a very wise and far-seeing plan for settling young ladies in life, and would, we are certain, if revived, enable a mamma, with a large family of girls, to get rid of them as rapidly as the delicious pineapple at a penny a slice.

It was the custom in England, a long time

ago, for "enamoured maydes and gentilwomen" to give to their favourite swains, as tokens of their love, little handkerchiefs, about three or four inches square, wrought round about, often in embroidery, with a button or tassel at each corner, and a small one in the centre. The finest of these favours were edged with narrow gold lace or twist; and then, being folded up in four cross folds, so that the middle might be seen, they were worn by the accepted lovers in their hats, or on the breast. These favours became at last so much in vogue, that they were sold ready made (O shame!) in the shops, in Queen Elizabeth's time, from sixpence to sixteen-pence apiece.

In the first place, this custom was extremely judicious, and should be revived, because, although the declaration of love ought, according to the opinion of the world, to come first from the gentleman, still a graceful hint, such as that of giving a love token (especially when edged with gold), has the effect of saving much valuable time by telling the swain in an indirect manner, that his advances would be favourably received,

and that he need not despair of success if only moderately impertinent. Besides, it is a confession that the lady admires him, and we always feel an affection for those who think well of us.

The reason why widows so often marry again, is because in the greater number of instances they conduct the courtship. What chance of escape has a man when a "gentilwoman" with even a moderate amount of charms attacks him with half-implied avowals of affection? Can a more brutal picture be imagined than that of a youth of delicate mind and poetic temperament allowing a young lady, owning a pair of eyes like twinkling stars, to look up into his face whilst she pins on his bosom a high-priced sixteen-penny love token, and yet brutally restraining his inevitable feelings? No! such a man would hesitatingly inquire on which days she with the twinkling eyes went out walking alone; and meeting her in some quiet lane, he would, in a voice very much out of breath, tremblingly call her by her Christian name, and having nervously stated the amount of his income, inquire whether she thought it was sufficient to be shared by two.

Has any gentleman among our readers ever had the bow of his neck-kerchief kindly arranged for him by a pair of soft white hands? What have been his sensations? Has he not turned hot and cold by turns? has he not felt suddenly giddy, and seen wedding rings floating before his eyes? These are not theories, but facts that any philosopher will certify and explain. They are caused by a sudden tightening of the blood-vessels of the heart, brought on by a difficulty of drawing the breath, the result of some violent emotion.

In the second place, this custom was a judicious one, because these tokens were worn by the gentlemen openly in the streets, in their hats, or on their breasts. Now, when once a youth has done this, he has no chance of escape. The big brother, the strong father, or bold uncle, has a right to interfere as soon as he observes a tendency on the part of the swain to decamp and break off the courtship. "Sir," he might say, "you have in the broad light of day, paraded before the world the love token given you by my sister" (daughter, or niece, as the case may be);

“you have everywhere declared that you were her accepted lover, and now you would meanly break off the match,” and with the shaking of a horse-whip, or a hint at pistols, the truant swain would be forced to return to the deserted fair one.

Now-a-days, if no letters—written in the red-hot style so necessary in cases of breach of promise—have passed between the loving pair, relations can obtain no sufficient testimony of the blackness of the swain’s conduct to justify them in using threats and thick sticks.

There was, however, one portion of this custom of giving love tokens which we consider to have been completely unnecessary, to use no harsher term.

It appears that tokens were also given by the gentlemen to their fair mistresses, but instead of the before-mentioned moderately priced sixteen-penny handkerchiefs, they were expected to consist of golden ear-rings, cleverly wrought into fantastic and graceful forms, and also of bracelets ornamented with precious stones, such as diamonds of large size and value, rubies, emeralds, and pearls, of good colour and high price. In

those days, the blessings of Birmingham jewellery were not known, neither had science unveiled the wonders of electro-plating.

These costly presents are wrong, because when youths are in love they lose a great portion of their intellects, and we all know that fools and their money soon part. We knew a man whose brain was once affected by love, and he, during his courtship, presented the lady of his choice with so much jewellery that he nearly ruined himself, that she very properly discarded him for his extravagance, saying that, though she would keep the presents as mementoes of the happy days they had passed, yet his recklessness was such that she felt she could never be happy with so improvident a creature, and it was better for them to part.

CHAPTER III.

A SHORT CHAPTER, CROWDED WITH COMFORT,
RELATING TO WEDDINGS, THEIR CUSTOMS
AND CEREMONIES.

At what age does a girl begin first to think of a husband ? From personal observation we should say, when she is about five years old. We have heard little things, hardly able to feed themselves without using their fingers, chatter, in the most natural manner possible, of their approaching weddings, and the kind of husbands they were to bless. They must pick up their notions from the nurses or the fairy tales, or,—wonderful precocity!—they may come naturally, like long back hair and smooth chins.

Supposing you were to take a female infant as soon as it was weaned, and to lock it up in a room by itself, never allowing anybody to go near it, excepting a maiden lady of a severely acid turn of

mind, who could pickle cucumbers by looking at them, and hated men as a monkey does red pepper; would a female infant brought up under these circumstances live to be ten without uttering the word husband? We would wager a pint of shrimps against all the fish in the sea, that she would do it before she were nine. Nevertheless, it would be a very interesting experiment, and we only wish we knew anybody who would be kind enough to lend us a baby to try the experiment. We know where to find the maiden lady. She is fifty, does her hair up in crackers, and lives on tea.

Ask a boy of fourteen what are his notions of matrimony. If he condescends to give you a civil answer, you will be shocked to find that his ideas are of a mercenary character, and run upon a rich old widow who will die soon after their union, and leave him to spend, as he likes, the immense fortune he will inherit.

But put a similar question to a young damsel of the same tender age; she will blush at first, but if you do not laugh and frighten her, she will soon give you a half-sentimental description of

the delights of wedlock, including a minute account of how the house is to be furnished, what is to be served for dinner every day, and the parties and theatres that are to enliven the evenings. Certainly, there are a few young ladies who vow to lead a single life, so that they may never leave their dear parents; but they invariably outgrow these mental deformities, in the same way that they outgrow weak ankles and irregular teeth. Perhaps they only make the vow in the hope that some bold youth may put them to the test.

Between sixteen and eighteen is, of course, the most critical period in a young lady's existence; she is so full of affection, that she *must* love something. Many obtain a great relief in writing sonnets to daisies and violets, but their affections usually centre themselves upon a small pet dog or a bird; their hearts are like champagne in India, ready to pop and go off at the slightest opportunity.

We knew a damsel of fifteen who was seized with a violent and secret passion for the aged curate of the parish church, and passed half her

time in a lonely summer-house, knitting red worsted night-caps to keep his darling bald head warm. Another young lady of our acquaintance was taken dangerously ill with a maddening love for a portrait of Mr. Charles Kemble in the character of Othello, and, after having destroyed with her tears five proof impressions, was only cured of her romantic attachment by the disgusting flavour of the strengthening medicine her alarmed relatives insisted upon forcing down her throat.

We have also been told of the daughter of a West Indian planter, who was left at school during the holidays, and being of a fiery disposition, employed her leisure time by becoming deeply enamoured of the young man who was engaged to clean the boots and knives of the establishment, and if he had not been arrested for stealing the plate, she might possibly have sought his blacking-stained hand in marriage. As it was, she always asserted that he was the victim of a base conspiracy, and sent him, carriage paid, a jar of hot pickles to console him in his prison hours.

One proof that the thoughts of young ladies are constantly running upon the youths they are to, or would wish to, marry, is to be found in the long list of ceremonies they have from time immemorial indulged in, to discover the name, income, and personal appearance of their intended lords. We could, if we liked, fill a volume with these divining customs; but to prove the truth of what we assert, we will merely mention four or five of them.

On Allhallow Eve, for instance, they used to burn nutmegs, and in simple country places, with no nutmegs near, they still burn nuts, to obtain propitious omens touching matrimony. If the nuts bide still and burn together, it prognosticates a happy union, or a hopeful love; if, on the contrary, they bounce and fly asunder, it seems that the sooner the lady forgets the gentleman, the better for her ease of mind. Gay, in the "Spell," makes a forward young woman say to her swain—

"Two hazel-nuts I threw into the flame,
And to each I gave a sweetheart's name,
This with the loudest bounce we saw amazed,
That in a flame of brightest colour blazed.

As blazed the nut, so may thy passion grow,
For it was **THY** nut that did so brightly glow."

Girls also made trial of the fidelity of their "young men" by sticking an apple pip on each cheek, and the one which fell to the ground first, indicated that the youth whose name it bore meant nothing serious, but was only trifling with the best feelings of her nature.

When a damsel wishes to know whether she will marry the man she likes, the "true fortune-teller" informs us that she must get the peelings of two lemons, and wear them all day one in each pocket, and at night rub the four posts or legs of the bedstead with them. If she is to succeed, the person will appear to her in her sleep, and with a manly, yet respectful bow, present her with a couple of lemons. If he doesn't do this, she had better console herself by eating the lemon peel and forgetting the shabby fellow.

"Mother Bunche's Closet newly Broken Open" sold so many copies, that the publisher started a gig at the 900th edition. It was filled with directions for discovering what "he" was like, and whether "he" would be faithful and

true. If a beautiful but mercenary maiden desired to know "what manner of fortune" she should marry, whether he was to be every inch of him a gentleman, or a traveller who had seen strange customers, or an honourable shopkeeper who never resorted to untradesmanlike tricks, all she had to do was to grate together a walnut, a hazel nut, and a nutmeg, and mix up the powder with butter and sugar into pills, "to be taken at bed-time." If it was her destiny to marry a "thorough gentleman," she would dream of nothing else but gold, and silver, and diamond necklaces; if he was to be a tradesman, her repose would be disturbed by odd noises and tumults, like a dispute over a bad shilling; if a traveller, then she would have a nightmare, hear the most terrific thunder, and see the most terrific lightning, such as he himself will some day describe to her, when, after their union, he tells her of his run-away mare on Hampstead Heath, and how he passed the night at the Castle of John Straw, with nothing to protect him from the inclemency of the weather but a pint of musty port and yesterday's *Advertiser*.

This same old Mother Bunche was the first to advise her million female readers to get up at one o'clock in the morning of St. Agnes's day, if they would have a peep at their intended ones. They were to go to a church door, put the forefinger of the right hand into the key-hole, and then repeat the following words thrice :—

“ O, sweet St. Agnes, now draw near,
And with my true love straight appear.”

Then the swain was certain to approach with a smiling countenance and his hair neatly parted down the middle, and inquire why she was out at so late an hour, and which day would be most convenient for her to endure the fatigue of hearing the marriage celebrated.

A nasty, but certain, method was to get a fine long-horned snail, which was to be placed on the hearth, and, if all went right, the slimy creature would write the name of the future husband, in a fine scrawl, among the ashes.

There are thousands of these directions, each one of which has been tried a thousand times. If we only knew what was going on, there are no doubt hundreds of girls at this very moment

consulting love oracles every whit as absurd as those recommended by good Mother Bunche.

Next to being married herself, a young lady most delights in seeing her friends go through the solemn operation. We have observed hungry little boys, who had evidently not dined, watch outside a parlour window those eating within. They appeared to derive a great consolation in seeing others enjoy what they themselves most envy. It is the same with young ladies when they are present at a wedding; it comforts them by making them think that they formed part of the delightful ceremony. Where is the little damsel who would not give her longest ringlet to be appointed a bridesmaid? She would jump at the offer, like a miser at a penny. The amount of exertion young ladies will go through on those occasions is something marvellous. There is a case on record of two young ladies, who officiated as bridesmaids at a Highland wedding, and who, though not above fourteen years of age, performed a journey of thirty-one miles in going to and returning from the church, and, besides this

exertion, passed the night in dancing reels. The hardest over-worked letter-carrier could not have endured half this fatigue.

In ancient times the bridesmaids held a more important position at weddings than they do now. Alas ! we have degenerated. In the present day, as soon as the breakfast is finished the married couple hurry off to the country, or abroad, to pass their honeymoon. The important duty of putting the happy pair to bed, has been abolished: the bridal couch is no longer blessed by the parish priest, neither is it decorated by the bridesmaids, nor are the company allowed to fling the stocking at the bride and bridegroom, to find out when their joyful turn will come.

In an old work called "The Fifteen Comforts of Marriage," we are told that everything depends on choosing the colours of the ribbands to be used in dressing up the bridal bed. The author quotes a discussion that took place among some bridesmaids, as to the ribbands to be used.

"Not with yellow ribbands," said they; "these are the emblems of jealousy; not with *Feuille*

mort, that signifies fading love ; but with true blue, that signifies constancy, and green denotes youth—put them both together, and there is youthful constancy.”

One lady present at this discussion proposed black and blue, which, although those bruising tints might now-a-days signify fighting, in olden days meant constancy till death ; but the suggestion was objected to, as those colours never matched. Violet was also rejected as being too grave ; and at last they concluded to mingle a gold tissue with grass green, “which latter signifies youthful jollity,” and everybody understands the true meaning of gold.

Such customs as these were good for three reasons :—first, because they frightened and awed the bridegroom into after submission ; secondly, because they amused the bridesmaids and flattered the bride ; and, thirdly, because they did good to trade, and upheld the ribband interest.

Then, again, what possible harm could result from the pastime of “Flinging the Stocking ?” It has helped to settle many a damsel comfortably in life, through putting notions in the heads

of the youths, and encouraging them to make the fatal proposal. It was practised in the last century with the greatest advantage to spinsters. The operation was performed in the following manner:—The men took the bride's stockings, and the women those of the bridegroom. They then seated themselves at the foot of the bed, with their backs to the married couple, and threw the stockings over their heads. The author of a book, with the most extraordinary title ever imagined, "The West Country Clothier undone by a Peacock," says:—

"The intent of flinging thus the hose,
Is to hit him or her o' th' nose."

Whenever anybody hit the owner of the stockings, it was looked upon as an omen that the person would be married in a short time; and, says the writer of a work entitled "Hymen," "though this ceremony is looked upon as mere play and foolery, new marriages are often occasioned by such accidents.

"Who hits the mark thus o'er left shoulder,
Must married be, ere twelve months older."

Listen to what Bishop Taylor, of "blessed and

immortal memory," says of marriage, and then say if anything, even though it be "mere play" which occasions it, ought not to be encouraged, since the result is so beneficial:—

"Marriage is a school and exercise of virtue; and though marriage hath cares, yet the single life hath desires, which are more troublesome and more dangerous, and often end in sin; while the cares are but instances of duty, and exercise of piety. * * * But the state of marriage hath in it the labour of love, and the delicacies of friendship, the blessing of society, and the union of hands and hearts. It hath in it less of beauty, but more of safety than the single life; it hath more care but less danger; it is more merry and more sad; is fuller of sorrows and fuller of joys; it lies under more burdens, but is supported by all the strengths of love and charity, and those burthens are delightful."

Further on he tells us that "marriage is the nursery of heaven," and also that it is "the mother of the world, and preserves kingdoms, and fills cities, and churches, and heaven itself." Talking of the sorrows of the bachelor, he says:—

“Celibate, like a fly in the heart of an apple, dwells in a perpetual sweetness ; but sits alone, and is confused, and dies in singularity.” Would any man—we say a man—wish to die the death of such a fly ?

As we so strongly advocate the cause of matrimony, perhaps it would not be amiss to give husbands a recipe for knowing whether they are beloved by their wives. We are indebted to the late Dr. A. Hunter for the discovery. He says : “Women who love their husbands generally lie upon their right side.” In a note he adds, “I can only speak from experience of one, and as regards her, the observation is true.” This obviously means that the heart is uppermost.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ALMANACK OF SUCCESSFUL COURTSHIP; CONTAINING VAST INFORMATION AND FULL GUIDANCE FOR MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS DURING EACH MONTH IN THE YEAR.

JANUARY.

WE have often heard poor dear dead and gone Lady Martello assert that she would not give a pinch of snuff (Hardman's No. 32 was her ladyship's favourite stimulant) for a girl who had not sense enough to secure the man she honoured by her preference.

Her ladyship argued with considerable petulance that any woman who attained her thirtieth year without having had the choice of at least three proposals, had disgraced her sex and wounded its prestige, and, as a just punishment, should be made to deliver up her crinoline and do penance in curl-papers.

Her ladyship's experience in matrimonial matters verged on the sublime. Sir Cresswell Cresswell frequently consulted her. Whilst yet a fine enticing woman, ere the dentist had completed her first set, she lost her husband, a gentleman indulgent to a fault,—indeed, he expired after an over-indulgence in oysters and port wine. Left with a family not only healthy, but numerous, she saw at once that she must keep her eyes open. When all the girls were at home, they sat down ten to dinner. Yet such was the indomitable energy and accurate strategy of this noble matron, that before Zenobia, her youngest, had completed her fourth season, her eight sisters were all carriage-people.

After Zenobia, her remaining comfort, was taken off her fond hands, her ladyship would frequently moralize on the folly of man. "Men," she would exclaim in her inimitable manner, "are the most ridiculous of all our luxuries. Next to dancing-masters and footmen, men are the vainest animals."

To a distant relative, who had four fine young women, and came to her ladyship for advice, she

remarked, "Look at my girls! Dear Jessica's hair was as thin as harp-strings; dear Penelope's complexion was so disheartening, I always called her my brown paper parcel; and my darling Zenobia's poor red nose would have tempted a blackbird. Yet look at them now! Even dear Patience, the poorest of them, has a thousand ounces of plate in her house. It is all nonsense for a pack of silly girls to put on their best frocks and sit quietly down, waiting for a husband. If they want to be courted, they must begin by courting; if they want a fire, they must first light it. The commonest little fright may have the pick of the Blue-book, if she has only the proper judgment to make love to her Adonis without his finding her out. The vanity of man, my dear, is such that he will gobble up compliments as gluttonously as a Frenchwoman. But remember, my dear, our little one must on no account outstep the delicate timidity of our sex. She must pat and caress the wretch's vanity with a hand so light that it would not wake a sleeping weasel; she must merely impress him with the belief that he is at length

appreciated. If he attempt wit, there is no objection to her helping him in the difficulty ; if he is fond of serious converse, a well-directed girl will naturally look solemn and impressed. I never knew a man yet, my dear, who objected to being admired, and in self-defence he tries to prove that his admirer is capable of judging. He returns the compliment, and calls her a clever creature. When others laugh at his stupid remarks, he remembers the upturned eyes that seemed to worship his words as he uttered them ; when his little sparks of wit twinkle and expire, he recalls the sweet lips that parted so merrily, and showed the little teeth all of a row. To save his own self-esteem, he vows that Phillis is the only being that properly understands his value, and for fear the market should decline still lower, he speculates in Phillis. These are my views, my dear," added her ladyship to her poor relation ; "and although your Stella must be at least forty, if she will follow my advice she may yet marry a widower."

The history of Zenobia's courtship is peculiarly applicable to the month of January, and

may be quoted as a fine illustration that love is never out of season, but is as sweet when cold Winter reigns as 'neath a July sun—whether we tread on violets or slide on the bosom of the lake.

The first and only offer submitted to the trembling Zenobia for her acceptance came from a gentleman in skates.

So long as any of her ladyship's daughters were blessings unbestowed, it was her custom to entertain much company at "The Towers." For fear her son, the gay Lord Martello, might, after the pleasures of a soldier's life, consider the home of her ancestors dull, the doting mother generously allowed him *carte blanche* to invite any of his brother officers whose fortunes stamped them as men of sterling worth.

One Christmas, during Zenobia's dispiriting fourth season, the guests were unusually numerous, but to no one was a warmer welcome given than to the elegant Lieutenant Hallen, a deserving officer, who was serving his country merely for the fun of the thing. The lieutenant had not been two days at "The Towers" before he ob-

served to Lord Martello that his sister Zenobia had a fine foot. He was in a foot regiment.

Certainly, Zenobia was unusually favoured with this blessing *à la Chinoise*. It—the foot—stamped Lieutenant Hallen as a man of superior attainments, that he should have discovered and appreciated this perfection.

To Zenobia herself, her feet were far from being objects of dislike. She tended them with the prettiest care. Her bottines were supplied by the Maison Bugnion of Paris, renowned for its *spécialité de chaussures des dames*. It was the prettiest sight in the world to watch Zenobia skipping over a puddle, and Lieutenant Hallen confessed in after life that he had stood many a time peeping behind a curtain merely to see her trip across the doorway and spring up the carriage-steps.

Our readers will, perhaps, remember, that the winter of Zenobia's fourth season was unusually severe,—so cold, indeed, that the poor girl would sometimes creep up to the fire, and rest her little foot on the fender. As the warm blaze played upon the high instep, she once remarked to

Lieutenant Hallen, who was, as usual, by her side, enjoying his opportunity, "I can scarcely feel my poor little feet."

"And I can scarcely see them," the brave officer replied, with a gallantry that scorned to be truthful, for Zenobia was doing her utmost to assist his eyesight.

It was noticed by her ladyship that during their walks the young soldier invariably preferred the society of her daughter, or, if another robbed him of her company, he might be seen following at her heels, his eyes modestly resting on the ground. The moments were of unequalled bliss to him, when a slight thaw stopped their path, for Zenobia had a virtuous horror of mud, and would be constantly peeping at her boots, crying out in her pretty way, "Oh, what horribly muddy feet!"

Occasionally, too, her better feelings would be called into play—as, for instance, when the sensitive girl stumbled against some awkward stone, "My tiresome little foot, I've knocked it off!" the poor child would exclaim, smiling despite the pain, and holding forth the suffering yet fascinating member. The first time the gallant

officer witnessed this distressing accident, he replied, "We must stop till we find it again; you'll never get another like it."

Her ladyship, who had been fretting over the high flush which from a child—through indigestion—had mantled in her Zenobia's nose, was but too pleased to find that the other extremity of her darling's form had monopolised attention. Up to that time her wit had ever been on the alert to defend her fond one's nasal organ. When it was unusually brilliant, she would ingeniously observe, "I wish this horrible winter were gone, it is such unbecoming weather for the poor nose! Yours, Lieutenant Hallen, is quite pink. And so is yours, my dear Zenobia." But what did one so passionately fond of feet as the Lieutenant care for the hue of a nose?

There is no exercise more healthy or warming than skating. There was a fine sheet of ornamental water in the Martello grounds, where the gentlemen often enjoyed this manly sport. One day, as Zenobia stood shivering on the margin of the frozen lake, watching the sylph-like attitudes of the performers, Lieutenant Hallen, his face glow-

ing with exercise, invited his lovely audience of one to try her powers.

"I should never be able to stand on my poor little feet," objected Zenobia.

"Try," pleaded the admiring officer, looking down at the feet.

"I should tumble down and die of bumps, or make a hole and be drowned," replied the timid little puss.

But a loving eye was at that moment looking through an opera-glass from an upper window of "The Towers," watching the countenances of the unsuspecting ones.

The owner of this eye was wondering to herself what they could be talking about, that *he* should look so perky, *she* so sly; and when, on her daughter's return, the truth was told, her quick brain at once appreciated the importance of the proposition.

"Zenobia!" exclaimed the excited parent, "to-morrow you skate."

"My dear mamma! I shall break my limbs," objected the pouting child.

"Stuff! Put on two crinolines! Your brother

has the Martello foot; his skates will fit you!" replied the parent. "And, pay attention to me, sweetest, wear your bronze boots. Mention the subject to me before *him* this evening."

Her wishes were dutifully obeyed, and a lively discussion on the impropriety of ladies learning to skate, in which her ladyship proved herself no match for the talented Lieutenant, ended in an unwilling assent. "There is a great deal of truth," observed her ladyship, "in what you have stated about this accomplishment being of service to my Zen, should destiny place her lot in the frozen regions; and the instance you mention of the Dutch women skating to market is a powerful argument, I confess freely. I adore, I love the useful! But let me implore you to be careful of my pet! Do not quit her hand; be ever by her side, until she is *au fait* at this treacherous art."

When a young gentleman undertakes to teach a young lady the art of skating, the dangers she risks are small indeed compared with those which beset the tutor. True, she may tumble once or twice, and scramble on her hands and knees,

and be laughed at, but his fall, poor man, will be a desperate one—he will fall in love. To him every inch of the ice should be declared “dangerous.”

Her ladyship knew all this when she uttered the words—“To-morrow you skate.”

In the first place it is essential that the fair pupil should be able to use her feet freely, and this can only be done by reefing up the petticoats ankle high, after the fashion of a Swiss maiden. If, as was the case with our Zenobia, nature has carefully finished her work from ankle to toe, it is a great treat to all men of elegant tastes to enjoy this innocent exhibition, which comes but once a year.

Is it not also delightfully suggestive to feel how thoroughly the pretty trembling creature is dependent upon you for her safety? How precious you have become in her sight! if you leave her but for an instant, her eyes follow you sorrowfully, and her voice pleads coaxingly as she totters. She beseeches, she entreats you to return. The modest beauty, who an hour since blushed as she shook your hand, now clings to

your arm as if you were her only hope in life; and let me tell you, sirs, to be squeezed about and cuddled by little hands no bigger than paper-weights, will, if continued for long, affect the brain, and make you see "double."

The greatest luxury of love is its sense of protection, and curiously enough it both precedes and follows love. That the fragile innocent is so entirely at your mercy makes the heart tender and careful. Absorbed by her fear, she forgets all the governess has taught her as to her proper behaviour before gentlemen; her coaxing appeals are entreating enough to be thought affectionate; and before twenty minutes have flown, the heart frizzles on the grill, and your destiny is cooked.

On the eventful morning, when the nervous Zenobia, sacrificing herself to her mamma's wishes, ventured on the ice, it seemed to her as if she had exchanged her legs for two highly-tempered foils, which bent and wriggled under the weight of her body.

When left to herself her ankles began to twist in and out; whilst the wind, rushing with violence against her full skirts, forced her to describe a

half circle, and placed her with her back towards the gay Lieutenant, who was flourishing a figure of eight in the distance.

Unable to behold the only creature who could help her, alarmed at the sudden fit of bobbing which jerked her body into a hundred attitudes, she exclaimed in piercing accents—

“Lieutenant Hallen, come! come! I want you! O quick! quick!”

Yet he came not. She felt she must fall.

“Dear Mr. Hallen,” she cried again. “O, please do! You must; O do—now!”

Still her appeal was unanswered. Already her body bent forward, so that she could distinctly see her skates; her arms and fingers were extended; when, forgetting everything but her hopes for assistance, she allowed these pathetic words to betray the secret of her heart—

“O come! come! dearest Mr. Hallen! I am sure I shall fall! Make haste! O, Mr. Charles, dear Charles, I know I shall fall! Please! O! dearest Charley, I’m certain I shall! O! O! O!”

A manly arm was round her waist, and raised her tenderly. It was the first time she had

uttered his Christian name, and the effect electrified his very knees.

Another great peril which the professor of skating must be prepared to encounter arises from cold fingers. The young lady, fatigued with having to twirl her arms and jerk her body about like a boy walking on a wall, or exhausted by the violence of her attitudes,—now bending suddenly forwards as if the middle joints had suddenly given way, and now throwing herself backwards as though a wasp had flown at her nose, at length struggles towards some object for support, and clings to it with the clutch of despair. Then the fingers begin to freeze.

By the time her professor comes to her aid, she could not, though a thousand yards of the richest silk were the wager, fasten his shirt button. The most reasonable and expedient way to warm cold fingers is to press them between two warm palms. As the grateful girl feels the heat return, she murmurs—"O, how nice!"

The professor is apt to misconstrue this expression, and take it as a personal compliment, and there have been cases when he has been so

loth to part with the pretty fingers, that he has proposed keeping the little hand for the longest period man can call his own.

Several times did the gallant Lieutenant yield himself up to the sweet influences of the skating lessons.

The sprightly Zenobia was a quick scholar, and in a short time she could run races with her tutor and romp with him in the delights of the sport. On one occasion they ran against one another, and had to cling tightly to each other to save the fall; and the position was so poetically suggestive that the brave soldier felt how much better it would be to make a clean breast of his troubled bosom and end his sufferings.

He taught her "to do" the inner and outer edge of the circle; they practised quadrilles, and she learned how to skate out her own name in the snow-drift. As she executed these difficult performances, one leg slightly elevated à la Taglioni, the arms waving gracefully and the body undulating to the alternate skate, the Lieutenant gazed in silent wonder, whilst his heart bounded like a football.

But the crisis did not declare itself until one afternoon when the straps on dear Zen's left foot—her prettiest foot—caused her such intense pain she was obliged to sit upon the grassy bank and allow the compassionate Charles to unbuckle the cruel thongs.

He, humbly kneeling, performed the charitable office ; but lo ! the unkind skate removed, instead of liberating the little foot, he still retained his hold, and as it rested in his palm gazed on it intensely like unto one consulting a watch. He was filled with admiration and tenderness.

The miraculous influence which small feet exert over sensitive minds is such that reason has been known to totter on its throne. That celebrated maker of ladies' boots, Monsieur Le-hocks, is frequently obliged to send his young gentlemen of the trying-on room to the sea-side to renew their shattered systems.

The Lieutenant gazed on the little foot, and then bowing his head as if in worship, kissed the patent leather tip as reverentially as if the toe had been the Pope's. Still resting on his knees, he implored the agitated Zenobia to bestow on him

her foot in marriage, and she—sweet blushing thing—referred him to her mamma.

On her wedding-day she wore kid bottines of a most delicate peach colour. He was happy!

FEBRUARY.

THIS is a sentimental and highly peculiar month, very favourable to marriage but opposed to horticulture; so that although the weddings during February are unusually numerous, no one in his senses would think of planting potatoes,—hence it is a fair time for looking after husbands and neglecting husbandry. Our good Queen was married in February. The birds also get married in February.

The pleasing little incident of St. Valentine's day adds to the month's romance. A few of our young men are modest; and many are too nervous to express their feelings when the eyes of their adored are staring at them. They joyfully take advantage of this easy method of sending their sighs through the post. You can buy a very nice Cupid, with a church and a wedding-ring, for one

penny, poetry included. Printed on satin, with the sentiment in silver, the price is higher. A vast number of cheap coloured insults are also sold: and, judging by the serious sums asked for the decorated compliments, we are led to believe that more spite than affection is indulged in on the 14th. Elevated emotions are very properly made expensive. The insults are only worth a penny. A temple of love is worth half-a-crown! But, we may safely conclude that no man would be such a booby as to pay good silver for a declaration of love, unless he meant to stick to his verses.

Who was St. Valentine? In what kind of society did his parents move? Where was he born and educated? Mention a few noble instances of his virtuous youth. How did he obtain his strange authority over birds, and cause them invariably to mate on his day? Give some account of what is meant by sending a Valentine, and choosing a Valentine.

Those who particularly care to know who St. Valentine was, will be sorry to hear that very little is known of the history of that sweet-named

and eccentric man. There was another party of the same name, who is often mentioned in fairy history as an exceedingly virtuous, well-educated, dashing gentleman, who wore gaudy armour, and went to Court; but we can scarcely imagine that the two were related. It is, however, true that he had an unfortunate brother, who turned out very wild and never shaved. This brother might in after life have reformed, gone into the Church, and been canonised: but this is a mere guess.

The dashing Valentine is evidently an entirely different personage to the founder of the "curious customs," for although he is spoken of in the highest terms, as a sober, honest, and industrious man, still he was no monkish saint, because he married a beautiful princess, had a large family of lovely children, and "lived happily all the days of his life," whereas saints, as it is well-known, were strictly forbidden entering into the connubial state, and led the most miserable existences it is possible to imagine, keeping up no establishment beyond a damp cave, with a skull or two by way of furniture, preferring cold water at their meals, and seldom taking anything

for dinner beyond a few wild fruits at dessert time.

Besides, the Valentine in the fairy histories is not reported to have taken any interest in the study of ornithology, and it is probable that, beyond chirping to the canary in the parlour, or occasionally talking to the parrot of Madame la Princesse, his lady, he cared nothing about uncooked birds.

Wheatley has endeavoured to explain the origin of the custom of choosing Valentines. He tells us that the saint "was a man of most admirable parts, and so famous for his love and charity, that the custom of choosing Valentines upon his festival took its rise from thence." We do not consider this explanation at all satisfactory, and prefer inventing one of our own to receiving so uninteresting a statement. According to our notions Valentine must have been a benevolent and strong-minded curate, who officiated at Lambeth Church. The numerous marriages—seldom less than fifty in fine weather—that each Sunday were celebrated in that sacred edifice, pleased and delighted his generous nature.

Speaking to a dear friend on this subject, he is reported to have said, "I like this union of heart to heart—this coupling of love to love." These sentiments never quitted him, and no doubt influenced his after fate : for a few years later, he removed to the north of England, where he held the romantic and lucrative post of priest at Gretna Green. He was the inventor of runaway matches, and eventually turned blacksmith.

Valentine had but one enemy—a man in the employ of Government as a letter-carrier. This fellow carried his impertinence to such a height, that at last punishment became inevitable, and "Valentines" were originated. In one day no less than half a million of letters passed through the post-office for delivery in London alone. The revenge was complete. The injured saint had the satisfaction of beholding his enemy sinking with fatigue from excessive toil, his shoes worn from his feet, and his hands blistered with knocking.

When dying, Valentine called his friends around him, and begged of them to institute some curious customs in honour of his spotless life. His weeping admirers readily assented.

Among his papers was found his will, but all it contained was a request that on his tombstone might be engraved these words:—
“He was unmarried himself, but the cause of marriage in others.” Owing to a want of funds, this last injunction was not complied with.

Of course we do not pretend to have given a correct history of the life of the popular saint. We find all the antiquarians quarrelling amongst themselves, each one endeavouring to account for the institution of this and that custom; and as they cannot assist us, we think the best way is to assist them by giving to the world an entirely new version of why St. Valentine presides over the sending of love-letters, and the over-working of postmen.

Many aged persons, whose courting days have long since passed, object to the custom of young creatures indulging in Valentines, probably from envy at not being permitted to join in the fun, and feeling convinced that no decent-looking body would condescend to listen to the mumbled out-pourings of a flirting wretch.

of sixty. A surly grumbling old gentleman, who existed in the year 1645, had the impudence to remark that:—"The custome and charge of valentines is not ill left, with many other such costly and idle customes, which by a tacit generall consent wee lay down as obsolete;" and yet, despite this iniquitous attempt, the "custome" survived him, you see, and has even grown more and more popular, and no doubt is in great favour in parts of England we know nothing of. We do not think the young fellows in Norfolk likely to let the "custome" perish, for there it has more to do with money than love, and it is astonishing how human nature will cling to a "custome" when there is a shilling or two to be made by it. In that high-feeding county, the children "catch" people for valentines, always taking care to run after those who are likely to be liberal. The mode of catching is by saying, "Good morning, Valentine," and if they can do this before they are spoken to they expect to see the hand dive into the pocket and come up again with a sixpence between the fingers. It must

be done, however, before sun-rise, otherwise, instead of receiving a sixpence, they are told they are *sun-burnt*, and perhaps get a box on the ears.

A worthy good soul of the name of Misson, who lived about two centuries ago, says of St. Valentine's day, that it is "a time when all living nature inclines to couple, and the young folks in England, and Scotland too, by a very ancient custom, celebrate a little festival that tends to the same end. An equal number of maids and bachelors get together, each writes their true, or some feigned, name upon separate billets, which they roll up and draw by way of lots, the men taking the maids' billets, so that each of the young men lights upon a maiden whom he calls his Valentine. Fortune having thus divided the company into so many couples, the Valentines give balls and treats to their mistresses, wear their billets several days upon their bosoms or sleeves, and this little sport often ends in love."

In those days when "Valentine-choosing" was regarded as a serious affair, learned dis-

cussions often took place as to the right and proper manner of conducting the ceremony. In the "British Apollo," a gentleman, meanly inclined, asks this question, "In choosing Valentines, is not the party choosing to make a present to the party chosen?" His hopes of obtaining an answer to the contrary effect are, however, destroyed by the upright manly reply of the editor, who, not having to pay the money, takes the popular side of the ladies, and declares that "the gentlemen ought only to make presents."

The "learned" Moresin, a clever philosopher, who has been kind enough to tell us an immense number of curious things, says, that at this festival (St. Valentine's) the men used to make the women presents; but that presents were made reciprocally in Scotland. The smitten swain in the Land of Cakes would present his loved one with sixpence, and then borrow it back again.

Some of the young ladies employed desperate methods of divination to discover who was to be their Valentine. Some wrote their lovers' names

upon bits of paper, and rolled them up in clay, and put them into water, and the first that rose to the surface was to be the lucky fellow. Other maidens had recourse to a more disagreeable plan; they boiled an egg hard and took out the yolk, and filled it with salt. This the poor victim of love eat, shell and all, without speaking or drinking after it. Such devotion is alarmingly lovely.

During February, evening parties are in fashion, the cold weather being favourable to jumping. It is a wise thing to accept all invitations that may be sent, whether you eventually honour your friends with your society or not. By doing this you are enabled to select the best houses and arrange your evenings with comfort. It requires consummate tact to work up the season's toilette without loss or extravagance, wearing off the first gloss in the best drawing-rooms, and finishing the faded splendour in second-rate first floors. This mamma will see to and economically (a few yards of new trimming are sufficient) carry out.

To-night Mrs. Colonel Merrimac gives a party, and four hundred dancers have been asked to dress in their best, and skip about the drawing-room, and fall in love, and flirt.

They are coming! they are coming! In the distant streets wheels rattle, and broughams with lighted lamps dart into the square from all directions. The linkmen are busy flourishing their lanterns and shouting, to make the givers of shillings believe the work is hard; slamming to the carriage-doors with explosive noise, and plying the knocker with a force which threatens inch oak and staggers the hall-porter, who, not a foot away, stands expectant by the latch.

Airy dresses of summer-cloud tissue, that spread out into floating masses as they emerge from the bandbox carriages; skirts so vapourish and overflowing that opening the brougham-doors seems like drawing the cork of well-bottled ale; for the white foam of crêpe and silk gushes forth and floats across the pavement, leaving the beholder to wonder how so much froth could have been held in so small a coach. Is there

a prettier sight to be seen than these marvellously-packed beauties—these living tricks of the hat full of feathers, these balloon girls—to watch the pink toe point daintily to the ground, and, happen, be granted one short glimpse of an ankle tightly laced in satin, to gaze after the vapourish vision and wish Mrs. Colonel Merrimac had taken pity on all bachelors and requested their society to waltz with the pink toes.

It is a known fact that girls can get very tipsy on green tea. At parties, green tea is always served, because it is considered to be a good commencement of an evening to see the girls giggling. Those cloak-rooms, where these pretty foaming creatures retire to sip their intoxicating gunpowder and see if their dresses are crumpled, are heartless places of business and opposed to romance, where the twiddling of wreaths, the buttoning of gloves, and perhaps the borrowing of pins, take place.

Never care to peep round the corner, young man, but hasten up-stairs, arranging a neat compliment for the giver of the feast, who awaits your approach with a welcome.

The colonel's lady is all smiles, and her eyes twinkle as if her brain were a heaven of delight and two stars shining; but what the dear lady suffers no one can tell.

Not ten minutes since she heard a crash—a sharp, crisp crash, as of the best glass ruined. Neither has Gunter fulfilled his promises, and a heart-breaking fear haunts her that the green trays have been carried to the wrong supper-party. With all the plate out and so many strange men in the house, how can she get the silver *épergnes* off her mind!

Yet her face is as joyful and animated as a bubbling spring reflecting the moonlight, and she twitters cheerful welcomes to all who approach.

An evening party is an ungrateful gathering; it is a sacrifice made to people who are dressed so nicely they consider their coming a compliment. Fine feathers make the birds proud and pompous. Jolly Jack, who before dinner was as convivial as a successful speculator, now yields to the tightness of his dress-coat, and is as stiff as his white cravat. Pretty Lucy, who at

four was romping with the baby, is now afraid to move, for fear her hair should play tricks, and—she doesn't know why—is as cross as Pa settling bills.

Before the fête is the glory-time for the giver of the entertainment; but, as the last guest departs and the extinguishing of wax-lights begins, she is forgotten. Her reward lies in invitations to come. She is speculating in the rout exchange-market, and will, perhaps, gain on the season's time bargain.

The music bursts forth; D'Albert's last valse sets the wreathed heads and satin toes beating time; the faces look pleasanter, and the eyes twinkle. Few have the courage to join in the early dancing, and those who do so move as primly as at a lesson.

Lounging and chatting is the preferred amusement, in the retired shade of curtains out of sight of mamma and sisters, away from all observation, as Charles imagines, whilst leaning over Marion's shoulders, and enjoying the breeze of her fast-moving fan; but upon the blind behind the bright lights throw a sharp shadow, and the

urchins outside are joking and cheering the amorous *ombre chinoise*.

Before supper a ball-room is dead, flat, inanimate as a fashion-plate; the dresses are there, and that is all. Do you imagine Miss Augusta Grenville would for one moment allow the adoring Horace to call her his Gussy before Moët had softened her heart? The sparkling liquid poured from the black bottle oils the hinges on which her heart opens; and, though she cannot but think him bold, she doesn't object to the endearment, and wonders whether he is serious.

The most sudden change to be observed in the harlequinade of life is that from the elaborate propriety of before-supper people to the benign tolerance and indulgent unbending which a refreshing repast has magically called forth. Remain in the drawing-room whilst the others—frigid, ceremonious creatures—silently pair off to the sumptuous feast. At first, a hum of voices and a clatter of plates is heard; for some ten minutes the knives and forks sound louder than the voices, until the reports of liberated corks

are heard, as if pleasure were duelling with dulness.

You need not wait long now for signs of merry life below. A laugh rings out crisp and earnest—that is a girl's giggle. A fuller and a more highly-flavoured roulade is next heard, a burst of mirth that rose from behind a double chin—that is a mamma's indulgence. The moment the mammas yield to merriment, that moment their pretty children crumple up their cheeks and show their white teeth. They have been long waiting to be allowed to be jolly without being considered forward or lectured for being vulgar. Now the laughter is in full-throated violence; it is like being over a birdseller's shop to listen to it. You laugh yourself, and bless the vineyards of champagne for giving freedom to such pretty music.

Elderly people admire the old-fashioned sit-down-to supper fashions, and in their hearts despise the new buffet innovation; but then they have grown lazy and have lost their figures, and like a roomy chair and plenty of elbow-room, for they care nothing for the dancing. It is the well-

arranged supper-table that commands their sympathy. But, for the young ones who have their courting before them and all its happiness to enjoy, the higgledy-piggledy confusion of squeezing on the stairs, and creeping into corners, and picnicing in out-of-the-way places, must have many delights, the strangeness of the situation being conducive to warm declarations and earnest conversations about nothing—those amusing fencing-bouts with love in which the thoughts unspoken are the only ones that are understood.

It should be a pretty sight to watch a girl eating if she has been thoroughly taught the art at a first-rate school. She must not move the mouth like a ravenous pigeon; she must nibble like a pretty mouse. It is also pretty to watch a woman drinking. The tongue, seen through the glass, looks so pink, and the teeth so white, no artist could render them; whilst the gurgling of the full throat is charming, especially if a string of pearls encircle it. Every evening party ought to end in half a dozen weddings. Champagne is still the elixir of love.

There are two troubles in this life which, though seldom mentioned, are oppressive. One is the trouble of dressing, the other is the trouble of undressing.

By "dressing" we do not mean the mere covering of the body with clothing for the body's comfort, but we refer to the elaborate perfecting of decorative attire for the body's display; the figging out and dandifying which the fashionable world most properly insists upon.

And by undressing we do not mean a rapid slipping off of raiment, like the unharnessing of a horse, but the long and tedious process of removing valuable and delicate garments, to be tenderly packed away, and which must be handled with the prudent mercy of a linendraper "undressing" his window—show-goods to be used to-morrow, and once more attract admiration and envy.

The vanity of fine clothes when indulged in by a horrible man is a very mean peccadillo—a poor, sickly vice. The niggers yield to it, poor things. They are easily caught on their native shores, like mackerel, with a bright colour. There is

some excuse to be made for the fish, though its pleasant flavour when broiled, but a black man in a bead necklace or a sky-blue waistcoat could never soothe the senses.

Next to the ebony boys, the French are the most desperate displayers. They live and die for a telling-toilet effect, but whether to gain the admiration and overthrow of fascinated women or to rouse the jealous bile of opposition dressers, is one of the secrets of their business. They are a nation of tailors, though their milliners we allow are poetic.

We have seen and conversed with a Frenchman who lived on bread until he was nothing but a human poultice, that he might save up his money to buy polished leather boots—a sacrifice endured through love of his feet, which were certainly neatly made and small.

On another occasion we made the acquaintance of a Parisian who in secret informed us that he had two hundred pairs of trousers—a statement so gorgeous and enormous that our eye fell, quick as a shot sparrow, to the man's legs, and, behold! he was lame.

Another French gentleman confided to us the news that every day he changed his clothes four times. His first suit was a dressing-gown, with Turkish appointments; his second, a careless lounging costume de bureau; his third, a toilet—very coquettish—"de promenade;" and his fourth the culmination effect, "de salon"—a *mise-en-scène* which was intended to make married women sigh and wish they had seen those enrapturing clothes before they had tied the fatal knot which bound them to wardrobes less sumptuous.

It is in Paris however, to turn to a more pleasant subject, that was "perfected" the petticoat which cost one guinea every time it was washed. It had little rows of puckered lace and little rows of pouting frills; and it was puffed and plaited, and required as many different kinds of irons to complete the getting-up as a book-binder uses to his trade. It is sad to think that this sumptuous mass of *volants tuyautés* and *valenciennes fines*, which brought such handsome fees to the clearstarcher, was, after all, to be concealed from view, except a very small portion allowable on a muddy day. The glory of the

extravagance depended upon gossip, like Rothschild's fortune or the Duke of Brunswick's diamonds. It is only in Paris—dear Paris!—where ladies have the courage to expend a hundred pounds upon a dress, and then ask their husbands how they like it. It is in that charming country that, every month, fresh fashion-plates are concocted, where bonnet-builders wait for inspirations, and all the joys of the show-world are treated as poetic impulses.

That mighty philosopher, so magnanimously negligent of personal appearance, Diogenes, is reputed to have boasted that he could dress in half a minute; but it should be remembered that his rapid performance was merely a species of dog toilet—a shake, and ready for breakfast.

A less austere man, Dr. Johnson, allowed himself ten minutes for his morning devotions to personal appearance; but it was a hurried job, and he looked very much like a man suddenly roused by a cry of fire. These men of genius never bothered about a clean parting or a neat tie. Let us be charitable, and allow half an hour to every disciple of soap and water.

The crinoline was a French discovery. It is a luxurious and graceful invention, and was instantly sent to Sheffield for improvement by our first engineers. England may claim the honour of red petticoats. They are captivating, and have their effect. To neither of these innocent frolics could the most offensive moralist object. Neither should the just judge turn his back upon another British flight of fancy. We refer to that curious arrangement of strings by means of which a lady can, in wet weather, draw up her dress like a blind and festoon the skirt around at modest petticoat height. A relation of the Bishop of Exeter—a severe man, with a touch of Quaker blood—professed to be disgusted with each of these fashions, and, having been in early youth (when dissipated) apprenticed (for three years) to a comic newspaper, he composed the following skit upon these popular adornments. He objects to them more especially in windy weather. He treats the tempest-tossed and buffeted creatures as ships struggling with a hurricane :—

“ The Georgiette, of Kensington, Captain De-

Lancy commanding, bound for Lewis and Allenby's, with specie for settlements, experienced very rough weather whilst working up Regent Strait. The gale, which was blowing from the West-Central district, seized the Georgiette fore and aft, blowing her maintop bonnet-strings into ribbons, and carrying away her sheet-anchorchief. With great presence of mind Captain De Lancy instantly ordered the skirt to be taken in three reefs, for the headgear had broken from its fastenings, scattering the hairpins to the raging elements, and the back hair in furious waves was sweeping the bare neck. Knowing that the Strand was not far distant, the gallant Captain commanded skirts to be further taken in, and, by the timely assistance of tugs, was enabled to return with closely-furled flounces to the Kensington Roads, where the Georgiette will undergo repairs.

"When last seen, the Nancy, of Bedford-row, Hopkins, skipper, was perfectly unmanageable, scudding before the wind with torn mantle, damaged crinoline, and double skirts flapping. The Atlas, two-horse power, with passengers for

over the water, observed the Nancy throwing out signals of distress, but was unable to render the slightest assistance, her wheels labouring heavily. The unfortunate Nancy is known to have gone down, but her hands, though bruised, escaped, and were eventually picked up.

“Towards nine o'clock p.m., the gale had somewhat abated. The Bouncing Bet, of Wapping, bound for Tottenham Roads with fish, reports having seen a clipper, evidently of foreign build (supposed to be the Anastasie from Havre, De Jouvin, master, long since due at Bayswater with tea and sugar), beating about the southern circus in great peril, her sansflectum trailing behind, and not a stitch of her gathers holding together. She had evidently mistaken the lights of Swan and Edgar for those of Hodge and Lowman, at the northern circus. She exchanged observations with H.M. man-of-war Peeler, who, though half-seas-over, gallantly took her in charge. A claim will be made upon the owner for salvage.”

A few years since—it was in the autumn time, for partridges hung by the legs, and bread sauce

was according to law—we had the felicity of living opposite to a lady who would insist on performing her afternoon's toilet with the blinds up. The lady was of foreign birth, young and beautiful. Our street let fashionable lodgings, and this lovely stranger did her hair in the second-floor front.

You may readily imagine how bewildering this exhibition must have been to a gentleman of modest and retiring behaviour. In vain did we endeavour to shun the spectacle; in vain did we avert our blushing eyes, or, to forget the vision, seek oblivion in the *Morning Post*. There was a terrible fascination about that revelation of hairdressing which forced us to look on as though a spirit voice had cried "Behold!" Yielding to our fate we allowed our eyesight full range, and made notes.

That foreign lady, when the toilet was completed, was as beautiful a creature as ever dipped finger in pomatum. But before the process of decoration commenced, she was a commonplace and rather plain mortal. Then our heart was low; but gradually, barometer-like, as the titi-

vated countenance brightened, our feelings rose from "change" to "fair," until, when the art-touches ceased and a sunshine of beauty illumined her every feature, the dial of our emotions remained firmly fixed at "very fair," and not even the knowledge of the artful process could alter our sentiments.

That foreign lady—perhaps the method may be new and worth remembering—dressed her top hair into a kind of rouleau, which she mastered by means of a thick ruler, somewhat after the manner of making rocket-cases. We have witnessed that patient angel do and undo that roll, coronet, or whatever may be its professional name, half a dozen times, until we grew as excited as Bruce watching the spider. How she smoothed and plastered it over the ruler! how tenderly she removed that instrument from the tube! and how carefully, when the result was approved, did she carry her head, as if balancing the fragile ornament!

Presently she would dive down and be busy examining the contents of her dressing-table drawer, and, whilst we were wondering what she

was seeking, her hands would come to sight holding big bunches of lovely ringlets, which in a little time were, with uncommon dexterity, securely hairpinned, and the head, which but a few minutes since was but scantily adorned, was on a sudden flooded with curls, elastic and glossy, flowing over her polished shoulders (which stood out like islands of ivory separating the dark stream) and cascading down the back, an irresistible cataract of loveliness.

Oh, it was a sweet and soothing sight to watch this fair creature, now toning down her complexion with the powder-puff, and now heightening the roseate tints on the cheekbone to a hectic flush, which spoke rather of interesting than of robust health! The correction of the eyebrows was a labour of love, and, crayon in hand, she devoted herself to the task with the patience and firmness of a writing-master touching up his pupil's holiday letter, strengthening the faulty lines, perfecting the curves, and straightening the jagged edges.

The eyes occupied much time, and required to be held close to the glass whilst under treatment,

for fear the dark line painted under the lashes should be administered with too bold an effect, and betray the art which imparted such bewitching brilliancy to her glances.

Another very original improvement was the application of a cobalt effect under the eye—a slight smudge toned down with a fine damask napkin, until the merest tint remained, as though the china-blue of the eyeball were showing through the transparent skin. The success of this “one touch of nature” was surprising. It persuaded the enraptured gazers that the fair being before them was but a weak and fragile creature, doomed to perish in her loveliness—to bloom and die the death of the roses.

Sympathies such as these, if too painfully aroused, are apt to interfere with enjoyment, by calling forth more pity than compliments, therefore my opposite neighbour, to convince her worshippers that she enjoyed better health than they might imagine, imparted to her lips a luscious cherry redness, by ingeniously outlining the “Cupid’s bow” with that delicious *pigment de toilette* known as “Chinese red,” an invention

borrowed from that truly celestial people, and which, on woman's mouth, has overthrown more men than even the Chinesian discovery of gun-powder has slaughtered from the cannon's. When this lady "over the way" had completed her adornments, it was indeed a treat to behold the success she commanded; and oft have we from our window witnessed her entry into the drawing-room below, and with tears of pity gazed on the paroxysms of her enraptured husband, who, unhappy man, would impulsively have pressed her to his fond lips; but, alas! he was invariably repulsed and his affection thwarted on account of the Chinese pigment.

These are but a few of the elegant troubles of dressing (to an upright woman a pleasure and art-study), and to furnish a complete list of them would fill book-shelves. In the great combat that is every day being fought between the sexes, each is so desirous of conquest that no art or strategy has been neglected for assisting the attack; and the article of padding alone would occupy a lifetime for its description.

In this battle-field, where the tailor and the

milliner lead on their opposing forces, the struggle continues day and night. Balls cannot end it, and the rout is never decisive. Supplies do not lack. The mangled trimmings, the tattered dress, the soiled gloves, are quickly renewed, and again the battle rages. Even old age valiantly refuses to retreat from the struggle, but wars in the same ranks, shoulder to shoulder, with youth and beauty; and, although frequently repulsed, still draws his brave cheque, and, with Truefit at his head, singles out the nearest crinoline.

Linda was the finest girl out of a family of sixteen, of whom seven were early selected by Death as sweet samples of worldly innocence, whilst the spared lambs remained, not only to share their parents' love, but eventually their property—equally, with reversions to survivors. Thus early her own mistress, and possessed of an independence which, if it did not warrant a costly establishment, at least authorised the comforts of furnished apartments, Linda yielded to the pleasures and attractions of fashion, and soon became conspicuous from her devotion to

saltatory delights, ever preferring to thread the lively dance rather than the domestic needle, and always ready to point the fantastic toe in preference to the wholesome moral.

Affecting the dress and manners of the quality, she grew, by forwardness, to be considered as a leader at the entertainments she frequented, where her conversational vein, commanding wonder, rapidly induced imitators, several of her expressions being adopted by her feeble companions, who thenceforth would speak of a man as a "dear toad," or, with unpardonable freedom, term him "an agreeable devil."

Thus, alas! had childhood's meekness yielded to a dangerous effrontery, which, heightened by extravagance in dress, so shocked her loving sisters that, to mark their disapprobation, they modestly preferred being "out" whenever their giddy relation called. Once, in the hopes of a sudden awakening, they accepted an invitation to drink tea, and neglected not to mingle the flow of soul with the refreshing herb, or to elevate the feast of tea-cakes into that of reason.

In her twentieth year Linda was fortunate

enough to attract the attention of a gentleman from foreign parts, who, though far advanced in years, still retained sufficient of his youthful fire to suggest the kindling of Hymen's torch; and, happening to admire the lady's rotund and comfortable proportions, as well as her activity, not only mental but gymnastic, he was seized with love and acknowledged its empire.

Flattered by the selection of one so wealthy, and softened, perhaps, by the presentations of jewels and vows (how invaluable!) of eternal constancy, the snowy coldness of Linda at last thawed before the flame of her aged swain, and, casting herself on her De Chemminy's bosom, she accepted his proffered hand, as well as the precious tribute it offered, coquettishly permitting the necklace to encircle her ample throat.

Now, the gay Linda de Chemminy allowed her fashionable desires full play. Mistress of a magnificent establishment, adored by her admiring husband, whose fond eyes were never tired of worshipping her queenlike robustness, she sacrificed to pleasure, employing none but the first pastrycooks.

Her life was a long succession of dances and dinners, junkets and high jinks, reunions, receptions, and routs ; so that sunlight was replaced by the glare of lamps, and the larks high in heaven might have beheld her still frisking in her drawing-room ; for with the gay Linda to be up with that early bird meant not the rising for the day refreshed from bed, but (O perverted mind !) that it was yet too early for her to retire to the comforts of her lace-edged pillow.

Her martyred husband, exhausted by prolonged dances, with which his feeble legs were unequal to cope, surrendered to a full supper, assisted by a sluggish liver, and quitted life after a hearty indulgence in a luscious Mayonnaise.

Refusing to heed this warning, Linda de Chemminy continued her sports. Her attendants, worn out with exhaustion, refused to stay in her service, and sought situations where more sleep was permitted. The delicate Alice Brockley, a girl so beautiful that one of our first Baronets once offered to embrace her, was seized with somnambulism brought on by having to

perform her duties when half asleep, and the sweetest face in England was only preserved to us by the timely aid of a spring mattress and cowheels stewed in port wine. But the punishment was at hand. The sufferings of English and French attendants were to be avenged, and terrible was the atonement!

After an unusually brilliant entertainment, where the sprightly and wealthy widow had danced incessantly and refused offers of marriage from half her partners, she reached her mansion just as the milkmen were taking their morning walks.

She complained of fatigue, and was assisted to her chamber by Watkins, Marie Chabot, and the lovely Alice Brockley. The undressing of the exhausted Linda had scarcely commenced when she fell into a heavy slumber. Her back hair was taken off and carefully put away, her frizettes were removed, and her Alexandra curls placed in their drawer; yet she moved not! One by one her golden ornaments were stowed away in their cushioned cases—bracelets, rings, necklaces, coronets, brooches, earrings, costly

trinkets, whose value might e'en have puzzled the advances of Attenborough himself.


Presently the roses were culled from the front garden of her bosom and removed to the conservatory of the wardrobe. Skirts of tinkling satin, slips of rustling silk, were folded and put by ; laces, which Elise would have kissed in rapture, were smoothed and locked up ; and, though the gaping servitors worked with energy, nearly one hour had fled before the frills of Linda de Chemminy's embroidered nightcap o'ershadowed her massive eyebrows. Yet she moved not !

She was carried to her bed uttering the most affecting snores. Five night-bells were pulled by frantic hands in livery. The science of London met. For months the deadly nightshade illumined that room of sickness. The faculty declared their patient to be suffering from catalepsy of a highly stubborn character, and they predicted that a comatose condition would supervene before cerebral activity could be restored. All this happened. Linda de Chemminy, after sleeping for weeks, arose an awakened woman.

Parliament is usually sitting during February, and that alone is a great comfort. Town is full, the spring fashions are just published, and the M.P.'s are in full song. It only wants strawberries and green peas to be a little cheaper, to make February the pleasantest month of the twelve.

Talking of Members of Parliament reminds us that, as a rule, they are unpleasant creatures, —cold, stubborn, and conceited—very. They make unsatisfactory husbands. They pretend they are wedded to their country, wedded to their cause, wedded to their opinions; and naturally, for a man to wed a lady after all these weddings, must be an absurdity. Their conceit can easily be accounted for. They look upon themselves as the prize cauliflowers of the nation, with the finest show of heads.

We once saw an M.P. wheeling a perambulator; but he was too good to live, and fell a victim to chilblains. We have known many a good fellow, who would have adorned a tea table, spoiled by winning an election. Getting to the



top of the poll turns their heads, and they do not like coming down again, even to eat their meals modestly.

The instant an M.P. is an M.P. he assumes a dismal solemnity, intended to represent wisdom. He swells with importance, and walks his daily rounds with the authority of a superior policeman ordering progress to move on, and threatening to pull up all grievances before the House. He engages a secretary, and fancies statistics. He sets his poor slave to work on blue books, and keeps him at them for weeks together, that he may electrify the House on the Egg question. With a little talking to, you could induce him to bring forward a bill for the better regulation of jokes, with a view to the suppression of explosions. His notion is that the world cannot be happy until it knows how miserable it is. When the nation requires rousing from its sleepy comfort, he gets up a tea-meeting, and explains his views as soon as the tea-things are taken away. If you inquire after his political opinions, he prefers, before he answers you, reading the papers to find out what is popular.

One of his great points is, that he is not pledged to any party, which means he is open to the bribes of either side of the House, or, as Attenborough would remark, that no advances have as yet been made for his spouting. When the mob is for peace, he bleats tame lamb-like opinions against war; but, when bloodshed is in vogue, he mounts the British lion and roars for corpses. He is fond of prefacing his speeches with the confession that he is not gifted with the impressive oratory of a Burke or a Hare, neither does he possess the persuasive eloquence of Canning, Fox, or Pitt; but in his heart he thinks otherwise, and if you want to get your son into the Treasury, you have only to tell him he far surpasses all these great men put together.

In fact, he is a dreary absurdity, badly selected; and if his wisdom brings forth fruits they cannot be judged of by his (s)peeches. He is an M.P., and that is his comfort; though most of his constituents believe these letters to stand for Man of the People, Moulder on Platforms, and Money in Pocket, with more reason than for Member of Parliament.

That girls can, with an effort, love M.P.'s is, of course, a convincing proof that there is no checking the charity of the sex. Talking is the prerogative of woman, and any man who invades her rights, by chattering until three in the morning, should be held in disfavour. It is, however, satisfactory to know that the silent members are in most demand. One advantage in favour of M.P.'s as husbands, is that they cannot be arrested for their debts.

We are not, be it understood, laying down as law that any dear child, whose cherished object sits on the Opposition or Government side of the House should, because he is a legislator, therefore slam the door of her heart in his face, and tell him that love is out. No; our object is to assist the weak to climb to her happiness—to teach her how she may ascend the slippery pole of life, and triumphantly carry off the family leg of mutton. We will mention instances in which success has crowned the gentle endeavours of discerning fond ones.

We all remember the year when the promising nephew of the respected Lord Perkins, the hand-

some and gifted Barclay McIntyre, was returned for Pairth. Of good fortune and a noble Scotch family, educated at an expenditure which at once secured the arts and sciences, he burst suddenly upon the political horizon and created an immense sensation.

Meeting him at an evening party, Lady Clara Vere de Vere accepted his hand for the Lancers and yielded up her heart to love. She at once resolved to be his bride or die of consumption. At her earnest entreaty, he confided to her the night when he would make his maiden speech; and further confessed, in the fondest tones, that the subject of his oration would be the extra duty recently imposed on Scotch whiskies. Moreover, he presented her with a ticket to the ladies' gallery.

The United Kingdom was on the tip-toe of expectation. Lady Clara Vere de Vere was in her seat behind the screen of brass, an opera-glass in one hand and the other pressing against her bounding heart. At length Mr. Barclay McIntyre caught the Speaking eye.

He rose, he said, to present a petition, nume-

rously signed by the inhabitants of Pairth, against the increased duties on whiskies. He spoke feelingly of the affliction the extra tax had occasioned in Pairth, and assured the House that he was pleading for the widow and the orphan. He pointed out the impolicy of this heavy impost, and mentioned, as a convincing proof of its evil effects, that whereas a few years since the Commander-in-Chief had issued a special order prohibiting the bands of the Scotch regiments from playing the favourite air of "We'll a' get fou" (because it had been found to occasion a *maladie du pays* and encouraged desertion), yet since this obnoxious extra duty had been imposed, not only had the favourite tune referred to been restored to the band-master's *répertoire*, but it had ceased to exert its inspiriting influence over the men; for finding that their national beverage could not be obtained at a cheaper rate in their beloved land than in England, they had completely lost that peculiar nationality which had hitherto distinguished their general behaviour. The honourable member was proceeding to observe something more, when

a temperance member requested that the House might be counted, and, as it did not contain forty members, and they were none of them worth having, the discussion was adjourned and the petition lost.

When Lady Clara Vere de Vere again met Barclay McIntyre, he was suffering from disappointed ambition. "I could scarcely restrain my tears," exclaimed Lady Clara, "when you mentioned the widows and the orphans. I thought I should have been taken ill when you described the *maladie du pays*. It was indeed beautiful!"

She was his only admirer! He instantly proposed marriage, and was fortunate enough to be accepted. They have now eight children.

A very witty little lady (of noble birth) once very nearly missed an excellent offer by treating the solemnity of the occasion with parliamentary gravity. A more charitable creature than Viscount Mappin, M.P., did not exist. At Christmas he invariably presented every poor woman on his estates with a quarter of an ounce of snuff. Beloved for his virtues, and courted for his wealth, the Marquis would have been the

happiest member in parliament but for the distressing circumstance that he was so confoundedly melancholy. Though he had tried every M.D. in Saville Row, in the hopeless search after better spirits, medicine availed him not, and but for hot punch his life would have been intolerable.

The drawing-rooms he honoured with his mournful presence were also enlivened by the sparkling dialogues of the witty Thomasin. On one occasion as he listened to her, he could not suppress a smile. Grateful for the new sensation, he resolved to make her his own.

To a man whose uncut timber at all times commanded the most abject respect, our little lady turned a saucy wicked face. As they stood in the conservatory, the Viscount besought her to be his bride. "I love you, dearest Thomasin," exclaimed the Viscount, "dearly, fondly."

"Hear! hear!" cried the witty Thomasin.

"My fortune is at your disposal," continued the Viscount.

"Question!" exclaimed Thomasin.

"My duty through life shall be to study your happiness," he added.

"Loud laughter, amidst which the member resumed his seat," interrupted the silly girl.

He was wounded to the quick, and went home in a street cab. She had to visit the lady's gallery eight times, and for twelve months praise every remark he ventured, before he could forgive her cruel behaviour.

Always, my dears, treat with becoming respect the serious proposals of a Viscount.

MARCH.

THIS month is celebrated for its wind and its quarter-day, and neither of these occurrences is pleasant. Every man when his rent is due finds fault with his house and thinks it might be better at the price; and is there a more distressing spectacle than to behold a carefully dressed girl buffeted by the gale?

Our heart has bled to see the full skirt leap madly into space, twisting and flapping as if it would burst from its gathers; to watch the frantic petticoat jump and struggle to be free from hook and eye; to behold the flounces

undulate and writhe like snakes! Shawls, pale-tots and cloaks, puff out like sails, and the straightest back seems round as a full sack. Perhaps, whilst the little hands secure the bonnet, the neat collar is blown around the face like a bouquet-paper, or the sleeve is thrust back, and the white arm bared, or the little curls burst from their combs and ripple in the breeze.

This is truly a heartrending spectacle! The toilet, the work of hours, destroyed in an instant! Neither does it lessen the sorrow to know that all assistance is unavailing and even dangerous, for, annoyed with the disaster, the fair creature is apt to be spiteful. A friend of ours once endeavoured to calm a frantic skirt, and had his face smacked, and we thanked the lady for the wholesome lesson she taught him.

We can remember but one instance of a gale of London wind having, in a matrimonial sense, been of service to the fair sex, and that was when a chimney-pot fell on the head of a thoroughly bad husband, and the elegant Lady Mary Lebone was made a widow. When we mention that Sir

Charles had added personal violence to his long list of crimes, and had raised his deadly hair-brush against his lady, we hardly think his fate merits a tear.

But Providence tempers the wind to the shorn angels. Although the promenades of the metropolis are forbidden ways to our lovely ones, have they not the Crystal Palace still open to them? Sheltered by that fine building, they may be as snug as a cucumber in its frame. The flower-show invites them to gather together, and show faces against bright blossoms; and, as mammas well know, there is nothing like a flower-show for stimulating the beauty of their girls. The countenance brightens with an expression of wondering admiration—every feature is in play; the little nostril expanded to sniff the perfume; the mouth nearly laughing with delight, while in the pink opening the teeth are sparkling; the eyes bright and full—almost savage, as if watching for a chance to pounce upon the flowers, and eat them up. Never mind looking at the flowers, they cannot run away; but such a show of pretty faces, all smiling with pleasure,


you may never see again, or you will be older, and not be able to enjoy them so thoroughly. That prince of good fellows, Sir Jackson John-boy, parted with eight thousand a year through a show of azaleas. He asked dear Flora Gardens to have a cup of coffee, and, whilst it was cooling, poured out his warm love, and made her cry, poor thing, and spoil her bonnet strings.

We are so passionately fond of flower-shows that we attend them all. We were at the first that was held at Sydenham—the most exciting exhibition ever known. If on that never-to-be-forgotten Saturday it had rained, as it had done on the five previous days of the week, at the very smallest calculation £40,000's worth of beautiful bonnets and lovely dresses, would most assuredly have been completely ruined. At first this statement sounds like the raving of a mad calculating boy; but to prove its truthfulness, we need only say, that at least 10,000 ladies were present at the Flower Show; and that each one, whether old or young, was drest in her best and her newest. So lovely were the toilets, that it was like a vast gathering of bridesmaids.

There were yards upon yards of costly lace; and miles of gold chains; gardens of artificial flowers; clouds of muslin; continents of velvet; and oceans of watered silk. We appeal to the milliners of Regent Street and Belgravia, whether our statistics are exaggerated or not. Depend upon it, £50,000 would not have covered the damage.

On that memorable Saturday morning, how many young ladies were, for perhaps the first time in their lives, up at six o'clock, and looking out of window to see what kind of a day it was to be? How sad and depressed they must have felt, to see the dull heavy sky, and watery clouds. Resting on the chairs, and waiting to be put on, were the beautiful new dresses, whose delicate colours would show each rain spot; and the dainty little kid boots that a puddle would ruin for ever.

Saturday morning threatened rain; the air was still and sultry, the sky leaden and heavy, but still people had set their hearts upon the visit, and, despite their handsome clothing, had determined upon risking every danger. Before eleven o'clock, cabs, broughams, and carriages, were



standing before half the doors in the squares and principal streets. The first to take the road were the vehicles hired for the day, with drivers ordered to "go steady," and not tire the horses. You could see they were going to the Flower Show, by the light bounnets and bright dresses of the ladies inside, and the stiff collars and wonderful waistcoats of the gentlemen accompanying them. The drivers' gloves too, were strangely clean, considering it was Saturday, and the old weather-stained livery had been brushed up with more than ordinary care and vigour, in honour of so fashionable an occasion.

By and by the heavy family carriages began to crawl slowly over the London stones, the springs trembling at each bump, from the weight of the six inside. It was late in the day before the dashing equipages began their journeys—darting through the streets like fire-engines, and making such a wind, that the leaves were torn off from the geraniums in the coachman's button-hole. We only saw one of these brilliant turn-outs. In the capacious interior, and almost lost in space, were seated a lady and gentleman, so stiff,

and solemn, and costly, that they reminded us of portraits. We thought to ourselves, the horses in the hired broughams limp, and are dusty, and have bits of carpet tied round their fetlocks; but the people inside were laughing when they passed us; the family carriage had a doctor's boy hanging on behind, and it was crowded, the traces were very tight, and the horses already panting, but the family was evidently enjoying itself, whilst that noble frozen couple—with their magnificent coach, shining like polished steel, and their black steeds prancing like circus horses—have passed a life so monotonous with pleasure, that at last enjoyment has become a business, and they ride down to a Flower Show, as seriously as a lawyer with his red bag rides down to the City. After all, jog-trot is better than dash; two hours on the road and plenty of laughter, is preferable to thirty minutes' rattle and silent grandeur.

The trains started every ten minutes, and it was fortunate they did so; for the cabs that were driving up to the station poured out such crowds that no sooner were the doors of railway-carriages opened, than the seats were filled. The arms-

of the clerks must have ached from issuing the tickets.

The crowd, too, was a fashionable one. As the purses were drawn out to pay the half-crown fare they looked heavy, the *portemonnaies* bulged out like miniature carpet-bags, and the silk purses were as full and weighty at each end as life preservers. The ladies took care to manage their hands so as to preserve the purity of their delicately-tinted gloves, and the gentlemen put out their polished leather boots with all the care requisite to exhibit their lustre on the soft foot-rugs of the carriages. Ivory-handled, lace-covered parasols, and gold-headed canes, were held in the most conspicuous manner, and everything betokened a holiday on the most unlimited scale of enjoyment and competition in fashionable attire.

At one o'clock the sun, as if to patronise the beautiful flowers grouped in the main avenue of the Palace, made his appearance; and as he did so up went the parasols of the ladies, as though they were presenting arms in gratitude for the distinguished visit. The effect in the crystal

building was extremely beautiful. Before the bright light burst out, half the beauties of the scene had been hidden in mist, and now everything was brightened up as a coat of varnish brings out the indistinct tones of an old painting.

As you gazed down the building, the roof seemed like a covering of net-work, whose threads, gradually closing in the distance, appeared from its lightness to be arched like a scarf of gauze inflated and supported by the wind. You lost all notion of iron ribs and strong metal beams ; it seemed almost impossible that such a covering could fall in ; indeed, the columns had almost the effect of having been placed there, not to support, but rather to prevent the roof from ascending into the air. The baskets of creeping plants, suspended like chandeliers from the ceiling, were brilliantly green with the new year's leaves, and the long bright shoots hung downwards, swinging in the current of air, dotting the clear sky, and pleasantly breaking-up the monotony of the perspective. At the farthest end was the crystal fountain towering up over the crowd, and sending

forth from every point the sun played upon, the brilliant hues of the prism.

Several birds found their way—without the aid of season-tickets—into the building. A black-bird passed the greater part of his time in flying from side to side and perching on the suspended baskets of creeping plants. His whistle echoed throughout the Palace, causing the visitors to search for him in almost every place, excepting where he really was.

Half-way down both the north and south nave were erected the two principal stands on which the choicest flowers were exhibited. The wood-work had been covered with a green glazed calico, giving it at some little distance somewhat the effect of a grass mound. Over each stand, suspended by thin invisible ropes, were two long canopies of white linen, that seemed to hang in the space like clouds, protecting the beautiful plants below from the hot rays of the sun. Above the heads of the crowd surrounding the plants, might be seen the bright flowers so full and brilliant with bloom, that until you came closer, they appeared like patches of paint.

Never had such a display of miraculous plants been exhibited in London. It is impossible to give the faintest idea of their beauty and splendour. How such masses of blossoms could have been made to appear at the same time, on the same tree, is inconceivable. Each plant was a heap of colour, as if it wore a skin of bloom, hiding beneath it the branches, leaves, and stems. Every quarter of the globe had contributed its loveliest specimens. It was a species of horticultural geography, a floral map, you were studying. Abyssinia, Algeria, Bengal, Calcutta, Damascus, England, Florence, Graham's Town, had sent in their flower-laden delegates to attend this congress of beauty, and assert the claims of their birth-places. The Azaleas, above all, were splendid. Here was one a mound of red blossoms, the down in the leaves making them glow like red coals, and causing so strong an impression in the eye, that when you removed your gaze, you saw—as when you have been looking at the sun—a dark speck floating before you. There was another plant, a pile of delicately-tinted pink, transparent and soft as the flesh on a child's bosom; another

was so white, that you fancied it would melt; another of so deep a scarlet that it seemed to step forward from the green background and stand out from all its companions. To particularize each specimen, would be simply to repeat your expressions of admiration over and over again. The best criticism was that of the educated crowd around, who, stupefied by the gorgeousness of the sight, could only exclaim, "Beautiful! beautiful!"

The young ladies exclaimed at each step, "What beautiful bouquets they would make!" A fine creature in mourning, and using a heavy golden eye-glass, examined so closely into a mound of scarlet bloom that the blaze of its brilliance flushed her cheeks most becomingly, and many gentlemen were visibly affected, and enquired if she were a widow. A little girl, with hair so golden you could have made epaulettes out of it, clapped her hands before a mass of white blossoms a trifle larger than a sack of flour, and said she should like to jump into the midst of it. We wished the plant had been ours; we would have let her do it.

There was a pine-apple it would be a sin to eat even at your wedding. If the late Mr. Lance had seen it, he would have had fits. Its huge variegated leaves hung around the fruit like scimitars to guard it from the greedy. The fruit itself was dusted over with a red bronze-like powder, and puckered in and out, so that each prominence shone like metal. They did right to class it with the flowers.

Many noses of exquisite shape were smudged with pollen, through their enthusiastic owners having thrust their enquiring faces into the bell-shaped blossoms, and the gardeners who had nursed and tended these wonderful flowers, had come to see how their labours were appreciated. These men walked about completely absorbed in the show. They were not ashamed of their humble shooting-coats; they rubbed against satins at one guinea a yard, and pushed between silks that rustled proudly at the pressure, as if in anger. It did one's heart good to see them; they appeared so happy and proud. They seemed to say, "We did all this; this is our lovely work."

The worst of it was, they criticised too

minutely. Just as we were worshipping a lovely pile of bloom, a gardener close to our elbow destroyed our dream, by remarking to his companion, "What do you think of that, Alf; getting stale, isn't it?" By Jove! if that flower was stale, what must a fresh one be like! Another couple of professionals declared that a *Dendrobium Pierardii Latifolium*, that appeared to us to be so full of blossom that its branches were in danger of snapping off, was "rather naked." It was clothed like a Persian prince!

The Alhambra was, despite the number of ladies present, deserted. Only one man, who, by the length of his hair, must have been an artist, stood before the *Perseus* of Benvenuto Cellini. Everybody else was admiring Mr. Gaines' azaleas, pink, red, orange, purple, white. All the vocabulary of flattery has been showered down upon these beautiful flowers; and do they not deserve it! *Delecta! optima! exquisita! triumphans!*

The clatter of spoons roused us up from our dreamy admiration. We were near the refreshment tables. All the silk dresses and pretty

bonnets were eating ices. Gallant gentlemen darted across the path, almost rude in their pushing earnestness, carrying plates of sponge-cakes to the famishing beauties.

Never was company so various and interesting assembled before. Invalids had found strength enough to come as far as Sydenham and see the beautiful flowers. They did them more good than medicine. Chairs were wheeled round the stands, the pale faces were turned up to gaze in silence, the thin white lips were parted in admiration. As if the flowers, in pity, had lent some of their own bright colours to the white cheeks of the sufferer, a slight tinge of pink crept over their sad countenances. Here came a youth leaning on the arm of his servant. By the cockade in the livery hat, we knew that the lame man had been wounded in battle. He had brought with him his laurels to exhibit among the flowers. But the majority of the visitors were as jolly and healthy as any life assurance office could wish. A clerical gentleman passed by, with short trousers, displaying his shoe bows. His black, angularly cut coat, was buttoned up

to his white cravat, and on his arm leant a lady wearing the fullest dress allowed by Act of Parliament—an acre of lilac silk. Those two must be countrymen, perhaps living in the neighbourhood. Their hats were brushed the wrong way, their hair was brown as old hay, and so was their skin. They walked about with their strong hard hands behind them, their thickly soled boots sounding loudly on the wooden floors. Blue dresses—gray, pink, black, white, purple, yellow, green dresses, were scattered about in every direction. All the gentlemen's hats were in good order and equal to new. Those two young ladies must be sisters, or why should they dress alike? That little girl is of Jewish origin, or she could never carry such a heavy press of muslin, so many ribbands, or such outrageous open-worked stockings. Besides, why should the nose be so arched?

The mob—the well-behaved, gorgeous mob—was getting hungry. They were making for the dining-tables. A report had spread that the pigeon pies were becoming exhausted, that the

lobster salad was disappearing, and the sherry becoming warm.

In the open corridors looking into the gardens, there were more flowers to be seen. Tulips as big as claret glasses were arranged along one side. We never did care much for tulips, and so we passed on to the geraniums.

Imagine a pile as large as a hay-cock! Each tree was round as a ball, the green leaves peeping through the bloom, and pleasantly specking the plant. At a little distance you could almost imagine that it was a bush on fire. Who could decide which was to have the prize? All were equally beautiful. Imagine any one placing one of these plants in his window; it would choke out the light, filling it up like a blind.

A smell of strawberries was borne on the breeze blowing down the corridor. We turned round as suddenly as if some one had tapped us on the shoulder. Strawberries! We followed the scent, sniffing like a stag-hound on a hot day, and reached a crowd ten deep round a long table, every one with the head bent down as if examining intently. How greedy every-

body looked ! It was a warm day, each lip was dry, and one strawberry was all that was required to restore the strength.

If those who grew these strawberries had done so in the hope of making them as big as beetroot, they could not have met with better success. How fat and delicious they looked, so red near the stalk, so cream-coloured near the tip ! As Tom Hood said, "Those strawberries were so large they would object to lie two in a bed."

Early in the day, we had heard one young lady say to another young lady whom she met, "My dear, *have* you seen the strawberries ? Do go ; it will make you so hungry !" Now we understood the young lady's emotion.

Do the judges test these fruit by the taste or the eye ? There are nectarines, and grapes, and pears—in fact, every fruit. The poor little girls stretched out their hands unconsciously towards them ; they would give their best bonnet merely to touch them. This part of the exhibition was cruel and wickedly tantalising.

For encouraging the affections of the sexes,

whether on flower show days or during the ordinary week-day exhibition, the Crystal Palace is pre-eminently adapted. It is the shilling Garden of Paradise. Conversation cannot flag when so many objects suggest fresh subjects. And what opportunities there are for a girl of education to trot out her knowledge and assert herself!

Whenever Lady Cockle de Pillule visited Sydenham, she always allowed her dear girls to enjoy themselves. If she met any of her set—any man whose intimacy was worth encouraging—she would, pleading fatigue, ask him to take care of her Lucy, and show her about the building. In this way she secured the unsuspecting Holloway Morison. She packed him off with Lucy's little hand resting on his arm, and when they came back both their faces were flushed.

As they walked away from mamma, the innocent Morison had, in a careless manner, asked his pretty companion if she liked flowers. "Flowers!" exclaimed the enthusiastic girl, raising her eyes to his, "O yes! I worship all

the Flora. Have you paid much attention to Geological Flora?"

"Not yet," replied Holloway.

"It's such a delightful study," continued the learned angel, "I dote on it. Only imagine lepidodendrons fifty feet in height! I always go crazy when I talk of those dear equisetaceæ and those pets of cycadeæ, though, perhaps you prefer the stigmaria of our coal formations."

"Yes," observed the confused Morison, "I admire coals, and, in fact, had a ton sent in yesterday: what would England be without them?—we couldn't cook, or anything!"

As they inspected the groups of the different races of the human family, Lucy found another opportunity of displaying her genius. "They are a queer lot, ain't they?" remarked Holloway, smiling.

"They are, indeed," muttered Lucy. Clasp-
ing her hands, she added, "How grateful we ought to be that we were born in England. Of the fifteen species which Bory de St. Vincent gives to the biped genus, we belong to the most perfect. Oh! had I been born a Hottentot, I

think I must have destroyed myself; for, after reading Blumenbach,¹ I never could have endured the thought that I was the link between the simiæ and the white races." So agitated was the poor girl, that, to soothe her feelings, he in pity led her to the picture-gallery.

There again her active mind overflowed with entertaining knowledge. "I wish I had been an artist!" cried the inspired girl. "When I look on a painting, I fancy I am seeing figures in my sleep! Oh! what a blessing is eyesight. Let us thank dear Cimabue for inventing oil colours. Without him, my pets Buonarotti, Raphael, and Titian, and my own sweet delightful Guido, could never have taught us beauty. But you must not fancy that I do not adore the Spanish school as well as the Italian: I love Murillo and that bold Velasquez. He seems to paint so rapidly, and dash it off with such ease, I fancy I could almost do it as nicely myself. I doubt if my beautiful Vandyke, who could finish a portrait in a day, was a match for Velasquez! What a difference between them and Gerard Douw, who took five days to paint a broom—Ha! ha! ha!"

Much puzzled, Morison replied, "Yes—a—I like paintings very much, especially photographs."

Amazed, almost overwhelmed by the dazzling attainments of the intellectual Lucy, it was an indescribable relief when he returned her to Lady Cockle de Pillule, and could soothe his feelings with a glass of bitter ale. From that day he began to study books, commencing with history as related by Miss Porter in "The Scottish Chiefs." But after many attempts to stock his mind, he shut up the book at Page 4, and wrote an offer of marriage to the clever Lucy, in which, though there were nine faults in spelling, the amount of his income was most correctly stated.

Now a day's courtship is conducted in so refined and delicate a manner, that it is positively painful to read of the cruel straits and rude, rough customs which, a few hundred years ago, surrounded the unhappy virgin. How grateful should our present generation of beautiful innocents be, to have escaped the insulting familiarities that, in the middle ages, were considered

the correct manner of confessing a preference, when a silver sixpence was considered a fair equivalent for a maiden's chaste kiss. An antiquarian, especially if he calls himself a gentleman, must boil with rage as he records the impertinence and boldness of olden time.

Who can read of our ancient customs without feeling his heart slam-to with a violent gust of rage at the guzzling weaknesses of man? Oh, how frail is human nature, how very fond of cakes and ale, how unblushingly given to kissing, and, most low propensity! how graspingly attached to a silver sixpence!

There is a smell of brewing about the ancient year, with its Leet-ale, Lamb-ale, Whitsun-ale, Clerk-ale, Bride-ale, Church-ale, Scot-ale, Midsummer-ale, and a thousand such beer-barrel feasts! How terrible is it to reflect that, whenever ale was drank, cakes were eaten and kisses given, or bought off with the fine of a silver sixpence!

A good man (probably in delicate health, and a martyr to indigestion) has poured forth his alliterated wrath, foamed up his rage against ale

and cake feasts, calling the custom the "sole Monarch of the Mouth, high steward to the stomach, chiefe Ganymede to the gullet, prime peer of the pot, protector of the pan-cakes, first founder of the fritters, earle of egge-baskets, first favourite to the frying-pan, and greatest bashaw to the batter-bowles." We are sorry he did not mention kissing or the silver sixpence, for he seems to have been a rare hand at invective.

We could snarl at the impurity of this world until our teeth ached with the wind of our breath; we could howl at its moonshine vanities until no pulmonic wafer could cure our hoarseness. Why should malt liquor have such a hold on man's affections? What is the reason that cakes should influence our natures, or kissing have any sway over our emotions, or a mean little silver sixpence have any weight in our moral balance? Oh that we could send our hearts as easily as our watches to be cleaned and repaired!—that some great philosopher would, with the magnifying glass of wisdom fixed in his eye, examine, by the bright gas-light of truth, our inner works, strengthen our main-

springs, cleanse our mechanism, and regulate our movements !

Most of these customs began, it is said, with religion, and have ended in—what? Feasting and hugging, with now a “sup of ale,” and next a kiss, now a mouthful of cake, and then a little sixpence to stuff into the pouch.

To kiss before a multitude is, as every lady will readily admit, fearfully vulgar ; but we insist that to buy off a kiss with sixpence is simply criminal. It is secrecy that gives to love its power, truthfulness, and importance. The embrace before the mob, far from raising up thoughts and feelings both instructive and solemn, such as purify the mind and add delights to the ceremony, only raises the shout of laughter which degrades, not only the kisser, but the kissed. If custom imperatively commands us to kiss one another, let the tree-shaded lane, and not the open street, be appointed for the ceremony ; let the birds and bees be the only witnesses, and then all mankind will willingly and dutifully comply with the ordinance. As for the little silver sixpence,

the very subject is so degrading that we shall not even enter upon it.

For some hundred years there has existed in England a custom so extraordinary, so wonderfully curious, that we could not, for the life of us, refrain from giving an account of the strange proceeding. It appears that, in the northern counties, but more especially in Cheshire and Lancashire, men on Easter Monday go about the streets in gangs, and whenever they meet with a lady, they—even though she should be very beautiful—force her to submit to what is called a “lifting” or “heaving,” which consists in raising her in a horizontal position three times from the ground. The rude fellows who perform this ceremony require what is delicately termed “the reward of a chaste salute.” Those damsels, who are what is ridiculously styled “too coy to submit,” may escape the dreadful infliction by paying the fine of a silver sixpence, and also receive a written testimony which secures them from a repetition of the ceremony for that day.

Now comes the more marvellous portion of this marvellous custom. On the Easter Tuesday

the women claim the same privilege, and pursue their business in the same manner. Bands of determined females—wives, widows, and maids—parade the streets, like lionesses seeking whom they can devour. Should an unfortunate man be espied, he is instantly chased, and, despite all appeals to the police, or cries for help, seized upon. One or more (Heaven protect him !) take hold of each leg, and one or more (mercy on him !) grasp his arm near the shoulder, and then he is hoisted into the air a limp, powerless, recumbent wretch. Afterwards the poor creature is forced to kiss the demons in female form all round, or if he is “too coy” (poor pigeon !) he must in like manner part with his sixpence.

This is very sad: no wonder a virtuous man has styled it “a dangerous, rude, and indecent diversion.” Let us hope that, as civilisation advances, a gentleman will be enabled to walk in the public thoroughfares of Cheshire and Lancashire without being insulted at each step he takes. Surely the Society for the Protection of Males might interfere.

Having been informed that Manchester was

usually the scene of these terrible Easter sports, we earnestly entreated a seriously inclined gentleman, and a firm opponent of kissing, to proceed to the cotton metropolis, and favour us with a full report on the subject. We print the result of his researches :—

“ Manchester.

“ SIR,—In pursuance with your request, I have visited this town, and made full inquiries about the ancient custom of heaving on Easter Tuesday.

“ The first lady I saw was a young creature of pleasing manners and expression of countenance, who informed me that she had often been subjected to this ceremony. In answer to my questions, she said ‘ the sensation of being raised was not an unpleasant one. No, the men were not rough. It was usual to wrap the gown tightly round the form, in the same manner as when using the skipping rope. She invariably wore new kid boots, for the look of the thing, like. Once a gentleman had made her an offer of marriage, as he was raising her in the air for the third time. She therefore considers that

these amusements, if properly conducted, would not be without their use. Everything, she insisted, depended upon who the lifters were. Unless she had accidentally left her purse at home, she preferred paying the silver sixpence to being saluted. On one occasion, when she tendered the fine, one of the lifters, an Irish gentleman with remarkably fine large teeth, declared the coin to be a bad one and, although he kept it, kissed her all the same. She particularly remembered this circumstance, because the fellow had a rough beard, was evidently a smoker, and had partaken of onions for breakfast.'

"An aged lady, of robust stature, was opposed to the custom on account of its great danger. 'As an instance, she would only mention that on one occasion some wild young gentlemen seized upon her, and insisted upon heaving her. They with much labour succeeded in lifting her twice, for she was of a full habit, and no doubt heavy. The third time, through some bungling, they let go their hold, and down she fell on to the pavement. Nobody could imagine her agony. For a week she could not tell what the consequences

might be. But, thank Heaven! there were no bones broken, though, unfortunately, the paving-stone on which she fell was, and it cost her a good bit of money to have it repaired.'

"A young gentleman, with light ginger hair, pale green eyes, and a cream-coloured complexion, who is known in the town as an extensive fancier of tame rabbits, and is supported by an aged mother, gave me the following painful description :

" 'One Easter Tuesday, he was seized upon by some young ladies, who instantly took hold of his legs and arms, and lifted him up. He called for help, but although a policeman was standing close to, the fellow only laughed, and did not interfere. One of the young ladies who had hold of his ankle, had long nails, which caused him much pain. His shoes fell off in his strugglings, and the better one of them he never recovered again. Even before the proper time, the young ladies began saluting him. They also pinched his legs and arms until they were quite spotted with blue, like brawn. One of them, a butcher's daughter, also tickled him, making him bend

about and writhe. They lifted him about eight instead of only three times, and as he came down he was invariably bumped. His mother heard his screams, and rushed out with a fire shovel, when his tormentors ran away, each one pulling his hair as she left him. His hat, nearly a new one, was thrown up into a tree, where it stuck, and, whilst he ran to fetch a pole, a boy sent a stone through the crown. He thought 'heaving' on Easter Tuesday a very rude and indecent sport, and so did his mother.'"

APRIL.

THIS is the month which brings good luck to milliners and dressmakers, but breaks the hearts of their customers.

It is a tiresome, vexing month, and plays tricks. Many a bonnet that starts for its walk fit for a queen, comes home in half an hour in such a state you could cry over it; and the dress that went forth crisp and tinkling, returns clinging in the folds like a wet umbrella.

If you dress for rain it most likely will be

fine; and if you put on anything that can spoil, the showers are sure to pay you out for doubting them. It was during an April day that a very dear little friend of ours lost her figure. To escape the rain she had to run into so many pastry-cooks' shops and eat so many buns, that for days she couldn't shut her eyes.

A case is reported in the *Lancet* where a stout boy ate four buns and had to be amputated. Every life policy contains an express clause against buns.

Girls must stop at home during April, or be content with an occasional drive in the park. Visitors of course will not be wanting to cheer the lonely flagging hours. You can now see who really does care for you. He who calls every day means something.

Always have your hair dressed by one o'clock at the latest. Do not play too much on the piano—it causes an enlargement of the knuckles. It is not bad policy to be found working a pair of slippers; all men are jealous of each other, and are the more eager to fall in love if they imagine anybody else has already done so.

Much pleasant *badinage* will arise from the Berlin-wool work.

Elegant reading will also serve to cheer the mind, and the opinions of the visitors may be asked on the last new novel, and the love-scenes may be discussed. We know a little lady who held such an animated argument with a gentleman concerning the proper definition of "true love," that they had scarcely settled the question before they started on their honey-moon trip.

But though the promenade is impossible in April, the opera season has commenced, and there is no reason why you should not go there every evening. A pleasant night is fair compensation for a wretched day.

There are three reasons for going to the opera, which are all of them powerful. The first, of course, is that you may be seen; the second, that you may see who is there besides yourself; and the third that you may hear good music. The last is the only one that requires to have its importance explained; the others are undeniable.

We can prove the extreme value of a pretty voice by a very sweet anecdote.

Prince Floribel was a beautiful man. He was better than his portraits. He had so much money that his treasurer kept his accounts with a yard-measure. But the unfortunate Floribel was blind. When his ministers pressed him to choose a wife, and each recommended his own daughter, Floribel hesitated. One day, as he was led through the market-place he heard a girl singing—"I'll marry that voice," cried the Prince.

The ministers were indignant, and threatened to resign in a body. Floribel insisted on leading the voice to the altar. The poor flower-girl, who had been singing to her violets, had to run home and wash her hands, and make haste back to the palace to be in time for her voice's wedding.

Who can tell when a Prince Floribel may be passing? Cultivate the voice, my dears, and even if you do not sing well your talk will be more musical.

It is an interesting fact, admitted and taken advantage of by poets, and insisted upon and also taken advantage of by music-masters and

schoolmistresses, that directly a young lady attains the age of fifteen her voice suddenly becomes full of promise.

It begins by softening and expanding, then it overflows with expression and tenderness, and it ends by becoming mellow, earnest, and poetic. The piquante shrillness which, even at the age of fourteen, accompanies the voice of innocent girlhood gradually disappears, the acid head-notes changing to sugared tones given full from the chest. These changes are peculiar to the fifteenth year of the maiden's life.

In all well-regulated establishments for young ladies it is the duty of the lady principal to pay particular attention to the intonations of her pupils in the first and second classes, whilst repeating their lessons.

Should she notice in any of the young ladies a singular gruffness of voice, she should instantly make strict inquiry as to whether the disagreeable change of utterance is due to sore-throat or sudden cold. If the unmelodious utterances cannot be ascribed to either of these causes, then she may rest assured that the voice of her-

pupil is gradually breaking; and, after having supplied the lovely child with a box of cough-lozenges, she should instantly consult the music-master, and order him to assist the larynx to his utmost in this its severest hour of trial.

If properly managed, the "breaking" of the voice merely means that it will crack, throw off and emerge from its huskiness, or shell, as it may be called, and astonish its friends and relations by its brilliancy, sweetness and power.

We are willing to allow that every young lady of fifteen, or—generously to extend the allowance—that every demoiselle of from fifteen to eighteen and a half, possesses a sweet voice. She hath the charm of youth to sweeten her tones, and, should her hair be golden red or hazel brown, the man must indeed be black of heart and dead of soul who could find fault with her chirruping. The only drawback that can be, with any show of reason, urged against the perfectness of a voice of, say sixteen, is the want of cultivation, more especially when the voice—of let us say seventeen—is requested to sing, we will suppose, for argu-

ment's sake, a song containing the vocal difficulties of "Suoni la trombona."

To obtain cultivation, it is obvious that the voice must be submitted to the directing influence of the cultivator, that is, the professor of singing. This is most desirable, but, from the susceptibility of the pupils, most dangerous.

At Minerva House, an excellent establishment, conducted under the admirable care and principles of Miss Ann Tropey, the utmost precaution was ever exhibited to preserve the interesting charges committed to her care from the dangers which surround the fascinations of the music-lesson. The moment Miss Ann Tropey detected a chest-note she wrote to parents and guardians, expatiating on the dawning qualities of Clara's or Julia's voice, and imploring, in terms which not even the slanderous idea of "extras" could rob of their disinterested enthusiasm, that the sweet girl might be placed under the care of Herr Prog, a gentleman of the highest standing in his art, an earnest promoter of the Tonic Sol-fa principles.

Another recommendation which Miss Ann Tropey never failed to mention in her letters to the parents and guardians was that the Herr was a married gentleman and the father of nine children.

The songs usually indulged in by the young ladies at Miss Ann Tropey's establishment were, for the tenderest beginners, such simple exercises as Chorus—"See the Pretty Robin," or, Chorus—"Twinkle, twinkle;" but for the more advanced pupils, those with the chest-notes and the overflowing sympathies, solos of an ambitious yet humanising quality, were permitted—for instance, "O, list to the angel's whisper," and "Be kind to your mother, my dear."

Miss Ann Tropey had learnt from bitter experience how dangerous it was to allow the imagination of her pupils to be worked upon by an elegant head of hair, a curling moustache, and a tenor voice. When first she became the lady-principal of Minerva House, she, foolish woman! engaged the services of that splendid creature, Signor Amavi, a gentlemanly wretch of thirty,

with a pair of eyes which would have pierced through a steel busk.

In less than three weeks the whole of the first class were in love with him. One poor victim wrote home for money sufficient to work the captivating tenor a tobacco-bag; another slipped a lock of her hair into his coat-tail pocket as it dangled over the music-stool; and a third, and a fourth, and a fifth gazed on him with the softest melancholy, and sighed when he asked them to let him hear their "Do, ra, me."

In those days love-songs were permitted, and Amavi taught his beautiful pupils such tender words as "I have loved until I faint, my dear," and "Look in my eyes and read my soul."

They, dear lambs, never failed to obey him, and did look into his eyes to six-eight time, and think to themselves what splendid optics they were, and how full of expression.

Such a state of things could not last long. Poor Sarah Jones, the heiress, began to walk in her sleep, and was found one night trying to open the hall window. She had, cherished invalid! a small bundle of clean clothes, tied up

in a pocket handkerchief, and afterwards confessed that she had been dreaming of the Signor and was hastening to meet him and fly to a distant land.

Next music-day Signor Amavi was confronted in the reception-room by Miss Ann Tropey herself, bristling with indignation.

The Signor was dismissed. He has never been employed since at any establishment for young ladies. He is too handsome. It is reported that he is starving. Mammas turn from him in dread, papas call him a puppy, and brothers threaten his bones. In vain does he offer to wear blue spectacles.

There was another Professeur de Musique at Minerva House who, judging from his diminutive stature and singularly plain features, ought to have been safe and secure from the attacks of the first and second class. This gentleman, Monsieur Gentil by name, was four feet six in height, and on his face he wore a nose almost longer than his arm. It, the nose, drooped over his beard and buried his chin in its shadow.

But did he not sing and play on the piano ?

And what school-girl can resist such attractions?

Before a month had passed the handsome Amavi was forgotten, and the dear Gustave stood on the pedestal to be worshipped and petted. He spoke the most delicious broken English; he sang little lively airs about the titled lady who eloped with the poor troubadour and never afterwards repented the marriage; he narrated to his pupils the incidents from the last successful French novel; and, worse than all, poor Miss Tropey, trusting in the little monster's ugliness, permitted him to address his pupils in French, "to practise them," as she said.

Little did the injured lady dream of the tender, heart-moving dialogues that took place. She should have noticed how Julia's cheeks burned, and Mary's eyes sparkled. Little Kate, who was neglected—the child's teeth were faulty—trembled with jealousy, and Ellen—she squinted—protested, through sheer envy, that she would "tell."

And "tell" she did, and only just in time, for when Julia's desk was broken open and

Mary's box examined, letters were found which made Miss Tropey profoundly grateful for escaping the danger that had beset her and her dear infants.

From that time to this the music-masters at Minerva House have always been selected from among the most venerable of professors. If he is repulsively ugly, so much the better; if he is lame, gouty, cross, and slovenly, Miss Ann Tropey considers him an ornament to his profession, and a credit to Minerva House and its long-established reputation.

Listening to good music is a better lesson than the best that could be given in all the Minerva Houses in the world; you learn the sentiment of harmony. They used to say of pretty little Catherine Docks, who was mad for concerts, that she must, when a baby, have swallowed the silver bells on her coral, so musical was her larynx after the fourth season; indeed, she once aroused a Jew's conscience and made him take back a bad shilling, merely by the pretty way in which she said "Thank you, sir." You will never lose money by having a pretty voice.

Do English people go to the opera to hear the music, or to be looked at and to criticise each other's dresses? Are they fond of singing, or is it simply that they are afraid of absenting themselves from so fashionable an assembly?—afraid lest they should lose their standing and good name in elegant society? How many keep an opera-box for the same reason that they keep three footmen? not because they require it themselves, but because the circle in which they move requires it, and forces them to have one.

We have often heard young ladies, who have been taken to the opera as a great treat, describe the pleasure of the visit to their friends, not by talking of the music or the singers, but by dilating upon the toilet and general appearance of the audience. We have also heard elderly ladies, whose incomes were moderate, but whose daughters were numerous, determine, after much inward struggling, upon the extravagance of one box in the season—not because any particular opera was to be performed, or any particular singer to appear, but merely because it looked

so well for the girls to be seen at the opera, and it advanced their prospects in life.

Those persons who go to the pit and gallery may perhaps be fond of music, because nearly all the applause comes from them ; but then the clapping of hands is seldom heard in England, unless, indeed, when some singer finishes his song with a plentiful adornment of *roulades* and flourishes. Then we applaud the vocal gymnastics so madly, that it half makes you fancy that if the performer had stood on one leg whilst executing his shakes, or thrown a startling summersault after his runs, his success would have been greater still.

In England, before an opera season commences, the manager has to use his utmost endeavours to attract the patronage of those who are wealthy enough to become subscribers for the season. Circulars are sent round containing the details of the forthcoming attractions—the operas to be produced, the singers to appear, and the orchestra to be engaged. He has to excite the curiosity and arouse the musical appetite of the west-end nobility and big-wigs. The

speculation is a risking one, full of pecuniary danger; for during the most successful seasons the expenditure is seldom balanced by the receipts, and in nine cases out of ten the only reward the manager receives for his six months' care and exertion, is the sympathy of his friends and a second-class certificate from the Bankruptcy Commissioner.

Despite this grumbling, there is no enjoyment like that of a visit to the opera; and we are infinitely grateful, that if we, as a nation, are unmusical, we are at least fashionable enough to require such pastimes.

How delicious it is to loll in your opera box and listen to the sweet sounds. There is no rest like it; the aches and pains of life's trials sneak away like dirty rogues, and the mind feels as if it could fly up to the moon on a fiddle-stick. Though the last dress doesn't fit, or the last boots are too large, such, even such transgressions are forgotten and forgiven.

As the divine Catti warbles the "Non più mesta," you could weep; when the entrancing

Walli begins his irresistible "Sì, sì, vergin," the tear falls and must be looked after. When in the third act Arturo drinks the fatal poison and Gilda commits suicide, each of those seven hundred in audience is a better man or woman, according to the gender. When the curtain has fallen and breath returns, everybody is more or less inclined to love—the he's sigh for Gilda, and the she's look heavenwards for Arturo.

You have scarcely time to draw your burnous over your shoulder and feel whether your wreath is in its right place, before the box-keeper's key rattles and Lord Ernest inquires if you are pretty well. Soon Sir Charles bows to you from the stalls, and Count Onioni inclines from the first tier.

All these men are softened; the fiddles still vibrate on their heart-strings; they have music in their souls and marriage on the tip of their tongues.

A more noble-minded woman than Lady de Luvian never used pins, and she delights in boasting that her niece won the esteem of Sir Charles de Mesne through being utterly unable

to restrain her sobs on hearing Grisi in the Miserere scene of Verdi's "Trovatore."

"Dearest Auntie de Luvian," cried the poor child, "if they encore it I shall die." Everybody laughed.

"No fear, dearest Stella," exclaimed Sir Charles, who was fond of his pun; "this is a Verdi-Grisi concoction that has no poison in it." They were married within the month.

You may easily know when it is an opera night by the number of carriages dashing down the streets leading to Wellington Street or the Haymarket. Inside these are splendid creatures smothered in flowers—heads, bosoms, and skirts are in full bloom—and they sit up primly on the soft cushions, and do not talk, because they are surly with dressing and afraid of deranging their toilets. They sit in their swinging chariots and stately coaches stiff and proud, staring before them, and not at all like the fascinating smiling angels they intend to be presently.

The man with the "books of the opera," wastes his time and flattens his shilling volume

in vain against those carriage windows. He ought to run by the side of the hired family brougham, with the six healthy ladies inside; they are from the country, and will want to know what the singing is about; whilst the lady of quality is only going to sit in her box to chat with her friends and show herself, and naturally the "Italian, with English over against it," can be of no earthly use to her.

Most of the cabs draw up at the pit entrance, where one or two weak-minded youths, with embroidered shirt-fronts lovely enough for any baby's christening bodice, are exhibiting themselves to the loitering crowd. Sometimes the full-dress regulations interfere sadly with gentlemen who have spent much time, ingenuity, and pins, in endeavouring to give to a surtout the appearance of a tail-coat. Poor fellows, when they are detected and sent back, they either stand watching, with melancholy and envying eyes, the properly arrayed as they enter, or else they rush off in desperation to the old clothes stores in Holywell Street, and essay a bargain for the necessary *habit de soir*.

It is yet early when we enter the theatre. The boxes are empty as pigeon-holes, and look black, whilst about half the seats in the pit are unoccupied, and the rows of benches seem like the bare ribs of some monster skeleton. It is too soon yet. The man in the orchestra has only just commenced to place the candles with green shades over them in the music stands. But the people are pouring in, and the pit fills up as fast as the full dresses of the ladies will allow them to sidle along the narrow space between the benches. Presently only a few bald-looking places are left, as though bunches of the audience had been plucked out like hair.

The box doors also begin to slam, and ladies come to the front, and make their dresses rustle like boughs as they spread them out before settling into their chairs. The family from the country has just made its appearance. There are four daughters, all in exquisitely-washed muslin, with pink sashes, and noble bouquets. They are animated and happy, frequently leaning over the box front to obtain a better view of the elaborately fashionable ladies on their tier, and occasionally

directing each other's attention in the most pointed pantomime to the fine shoulders of some lovely creature, who in alarm dives behind her curtain and hides.

The musicians have taken their places. Some are tuning their instruments as if impatient to begin, as racers paw the ground. You hear the bumping of the scenes being shifted behind the curtain. The audience coughs, talks, or does what it likes—some stand up as though stretching their legs before the cramping begins. Now the pit is crowded, and the last that enter are standing on tiptoe, and in vain looking about them for a seat. They will have to remain on their legs for the evening.

Suddenly the lights are turned on, everything brightens, from the glass points of the chandelier to the countenances of the audience. Ladies take their places, and attentively fix their eyes upon a gentleman with white kid gloves, who is struggling to the throne in the orchestra. It is Signor Costa, the great breaker-in of skittish fiddlers and snorting trumpeters. He turns round carelessly and examines the

house, says a word or two to those around him, and then mounts his perch to receive the applause.

A minute more, and a tap on one of the tin-shades is heard; his gloved hand is raised, and, as it descends, out bursts the harmony of the band. The violin bows move up and down as regularly as machinery, the pink dots of hands jump about like birds, and the huge trombone shines like a brass cannon. The boxes fill more rapidly, and the stalls are being occupied, as if the music had called the audience to their places.

As the curtain ascends not a sound is to be heard but the "sh-h-h's" of the few who think that perfect silence can only be obtained by making a disagreeable sound. Ladies place aside their bouquets and unfold their fans. There are at least one hundred of these "wind instruments" moving backwards and forwards, making your eyes wink to watch them; some as large as palm leaves, others not bigger than the tail of a bantam hen.

The opera to be performed is that of "Lu-

crezia Borgia." When Genaro comes on the stage the gloves in the pit flutter like a flock of white pigeons, and stir the air into a breeze. The young ladies from the country are asking "Who is it?" and when they learn it is Mario, quarrel among themselves for the first peep through the opera glass; but the noble ladies in the dress tier, where the wax lights glitter on the gilt mouldings adorning the bulging panels, keep on chatting together, and pay no more attention to Genaro and his musical adventures than if they were gossiping in a railway carriage.

Another round of applause. This time it is Grisi; and as she, in acknowledgment, bends her head and shows her beautiful white shoulders, the gentlemen, in their turn, focus their glasses on her. In the stage box, three old bucks, with rich red faces and white hair, who still carry about them the perfume of the dinner-table and rich wines, receive the Italian lady with patronising smiles, and delicately beat their fingers together, whilst they call her "a wonderfully fine woman," and protest that "her figure is as perfect as ever." These gentlemen being highly

fascinating lady-killers, judge of the actresses at the opera rather by their personal appearance than by their voice.

A duet, a chorus, and a trio has been sung, and yet nobody has applauded. The singing was exquisite, making the pleasure of listening to it almost amount to an agony of delight. What can be the matter with the people? They are not rapt in the interest of the drama, because they continue the chatting in the boxes and the fanning in the pit. How the poor *artistes* must think of Italy, and its enthusiasm, and mad gratitude! There, as Stendhal tells us, "after having applauded to excess, shouted, and made every possible noise for at least five minutes, when they had no longer the strength to shout, he noticed every one speaking to his neighbour—a thing quite at variance with the suspicious nature of the Italian. The apathetic and the aged cried, from their boxes, 'O bello! O bello!' and kept on repeating this at least twenty times. They were addressing nobody; such a repetition of the same words would have been absurd; they had lost all idea of having any one next to them,

and spoke to themselves." But, in England, a sultry evening, or the fear of being thought vulgar, is enough to check our enthusiasm, as if the heat made us grow limp, like gutta percha.

When the acts are over, the people begin to stir and stretch their legs. Thirsty youths rush out to enjoy a draught of bitter beer; others sweep round the theatre with their glasses, and look at every face in the house. Now is the permitted moment for criticism. There is one lady in the grand tier arrayed in a black gown, trimmed with red roses. On her head she wears a wreath of buds. She looks particularly beautiful, and everybody is staring at her, but she endures patiently. Her long neck and white skin, and the art with which her singular dress has been forced to become her, attract great notice, and she enjoys her triumph. She ought to feel happy!

Every variety of feature is to be seen. There are two young ladies in yellow silk, with red scarfs. Their costume, brown skin, black hair and eyes, show that they are West Indian beauties. How white all the partings in the

hair appear as you look down into the pit—almost like chalk lines! The varieties of head-dresses are sufficiently numerous to furnish illustrations for a barber's guide. Some with little crisp curls, like vine tendrils; others with large bunches of twining locks, falling down to and resting on the shoulders. There are plenty of heads dressed *à l'Impératrice*, showing the white temples and the blue veins in them; and there are many who have surrounded the face with an infinite number of *acroche cœurs* gummed to the cheeks, and making them look as if they had been tattooed.

The people are coming back again to their places. Those in the pit make a great disturbance, as they force everybody to rise up and let them pass. They leave a trail of confusion behind them. The third act begins, and our country friends opposite open their books again, and follow closely the words of the songs. If a singer misses a single word, they are down upon him, and don't think him worth much. Everybody is waiting anxiously for Orsini's drinking song, because they all know the air or have tried

to sing it at home. At length Mademoiselle Didiée steps forward, cup in hand, and turning her pretty face to the house, begins the melody.

Now every one is taking a music lesson, noticing when they should give the proper expression, when dwell upon the notes or drop the voice. The song is encored. Englishmen shout "bravo;" and foreigners "bis." The country family nod to each other, and make mental notes for the next time they practise together.

The boxes are growing weary of the music, and the hissing noise of their whispered chat is heard everywhere. The beautiful dirge of the monks, "*Sanctum et terribile nomen ejus*," is interrupted by the shrill laughter of a young lady, who perhaps has seen the opera twice, and so, of course, knows it by heart. Two boxes off we hear gentlemen talking. "Do you like that girl with light hair in the pit tier, under the fourth chandelier?" says one. "Do you mean the one in black, looking up now?" answers the other. "No, the one smelling her bouquet," continues the first speaker. After a pause of examination, an indignant voice cries, "My dear

fellow, she's got no eyelashes;" and so the debate is finished.

The opera is over. Grisi and Mario have been called for, and have had bouquets thrown to them from mysterious side boxes. The three red-faced gentlemen have done all in their power to attract the attention of the prima donna as she passed across the stage, being no doubt anxious to lacerate her heart with a few loving glances; but the fair Italian has not even noticed them. One of them now calls her "a splendid wreck;" for he is spiteful and annoyed.

More than one-half of the company are preparing to leave, and people hitherto concealed behind the curtains are showing themselves. We hear one old lady in a pit-box cry piteously, "Which is the Duchess?—do show me;" and obtaining the required information, she points her opera-glass fiercely at the curiosity. After a moment, she says with a sigh, "I couldn't catch her face, but I saw her hand distinctly; it was very beautiful!" She had enjoyed her evening.

MAY.

Now all pretty maidens must look sprightly and kind, and rise from their nests fresh as the lark; now we must look into eyes and judge their brightness, and look on lips and imagine their sweetness, for May has come, "May, charming May," and a queen must be chosen. There was a bonny Queen came with May some years since, and she sits on the throne now, and may she grace it as long as good men's prayers are heard.

Now the sun shines out so brightly you must be off to the shops for parasols, and your candle-light beauties will choose them with pink linings, and your ruddy faces will purchase them with blue linings, for the dear girls know everything, and can beat artists all to nothing for effect.

And now you will begin to chatter together about what is worn; will dresses be open *en cœur* or closed at the throat? will poplins, taffets antiques, or moires, gain the day? or will foulards or tarlatanes make men write sonnets? You

talk of ruches, and soutaches, and passementeries; you fight very sweetly over a flounce, and whether a bonnet is too square, round, or pointed; and when you have settled the point, the only result is that you look as pretty as you did before.

We have the authority of the great Dr. Johnson for stating, that a husband does a wise thing when he dresses his wife handsomely. When the immortal Samuel laid down a dictum he meant it, though such was his genius that he could argue just as convincingly for as against a worldly fancy, and not unfrequently he did both. "When a gentleman told him," writes Boswell, "he had bought a suit of lace for his lady, he said, 'Well, sir, you have done a good thing and a wise thing.'—'I have done a good thing,' said the gentleman, 'but I do not know that I have done a wise thing.'—Johnson: 'Yes, sir; no money is better spent than what is laid out for domestic satisfaction. A man is pleased that his wife is dressed as well as other people, and a wife is pleased that she is dressed as handsomely as her husband would wish her.'"

And so says Dr. Johnson, and many a wife will bless him for it, and will read it over to her dear, that she may profit by the suggestion and possess a suit of lace.

We cannot remember, though we have rummaged our brain for an example, a single instance of an offer of marriage having been made to a young lady while in the act of shopping. Our natures are protectively mean, and we instinctively say "Good day" when a fair one enters the *magasin*. Until the entrancing "O Charles!" has been uttered, and the bargain sealed by the most enrapturing of all kisses, we seldom feel inclined to change a fifty-pound note on speculation. We leave that to papa, who of course never grumbles, but rather likes it as a joke.

The foolish Tom Trumpryville, a well-made young man, and not devoid of sense, but poor, shamefully poor, succeeded in winning the affections of Miss Luna Tique, then in her forty-eighth winter, past all hopes of concealment. The lady had 1820 port in her cellar,—bins

full; and if she had drawn upon Coutts for 50,000*l.* they would have honoured the cheque, and sent her word in the morning that she had slightly overdrawn her account. It need not be said that Tom was selling himself in the dearest market,—not affectionately but commercially speaking.

It happened that Luna insisted that her Tom should accompany her (for she was fond of exhibiting him) to the “Salon des Fleurs,” where the wedding wreath was to be purchased.

He was a bold young dog, and would have done worse things than that to make sure of the bullion at Coutts's. But cruel punishment was awaiting him on the first floor. Whilst Miss Luna Tique was simpering over this and that chaplet of orange blossoms, Tom, who had mounted his eye-glass and was staring at the fluttering shop-girls as fiercely as a hawk at chickens, caught sight of a lovely form standing before another cheval glass, and trying on another wreath of orange flowers. Merciful powers! could he believe his eye-glass?

There stood the beautiful and once-adored

Cicely Isles, the very girl who had promised to wait for him if it were thirty years ; to possess whom he was speculating on the shattered constitution of Miss Luna Tique.

Then Cicely was also to be married ! To whom ? Wicked false one, what should he do ? Should he fling up Coutts's account ; and reclaim the perjured beauty ?

In the evening he gave his little brother five shillings, and sent him abroad to learn news concerning Cicely Isles, and when the messenger returned Tom was informed that the beautiful one was the accepted bride of the Rev. T. Kettle, perpetual curate of St. Cold Without.!

This broke Tom's heart, and he never was the same man. He married his money, but he couldn't forgive Cicely. "To leave me for a confounded T. Kettle," he would blurt out in his misery.

On the other hand, the late Cecilia Isles would not unfrequently exclaim, when nobody could hear her, "I wish him joy of his Luna Tique !" So neither was happy, though they

might have been if Coutts's account had not stood in the way.

This is the only romance we know of in connection with artificial flowers.

Shortly after the return of our troops from the glorious campaign of the Crimea—that most magnificent flash-in-the-pan and “*nascitur ridiculus mus*” war, which decorates our history with laurels thicker and greener than those of any church at Christmas time—whilst the beards and bronzed skins of our warriors were yet the admiration of the metropolis, and no evening party was considered perfect and fashionable unless a sun-baked hero were present; in those days of renown Barry O’Claver, being full of wine, began to brag of what he had done and could do, entertaining his friends at the Reform with vivid pictures of his prodigies of valour, when Luke Dove, Esq., of Manchester, a gentlemanly and pulmonic man of peace, offered to bet ten pounds to a bad shilling that he could mention one daring action which the slashing Captain, fire-eater as he was, would not have intrepidity enough to perform.

The man of peace proposed that the man of war should enter one of our largest linendraper's emporiums, and, walking up to the busiest counter, request, in a loud voice, to be shown the last thing out in crinolines.

Though heavily in debt, Barry O'Claver declined the wager, and has ever since hated the man whose demon mind could imagine a torture so refined.

Is there in all this world of London a sight more affecting than that of a man entering a linendraper's shop? We have seen the wretches at Bow Street Station dart across the pavements, and, without hazarding even one glance at the mob, dive out of sight into the prison van; we have formed one of the crowd in Cursitor Street when the seized debtor has been transferred from the cab to Mr. Sloman's hospitable cage; we have witnessed the "Stop Thief!" of the mean prig who had waylaid and robbed the little children sent for pennyworths to the chandler's shop; but never have we beheld any expression so thoroughly dejected and helpless as that which deadens the countenance of the unhappy man

who sneaks after his wife through the swing-doors of the mercer's shop !

Oh ! it is a fearful and heartrending picture. She, full of pride, hoping that her friends may see her in her glory of going out shopping ; in no hurry ; sometimes even staying at the very threshold and keeping the shopwalker with the bright mahogany swing doors wide open awaiting her entry, whilst she wonders how the green silk at four and six would make up.

He, hiding his face and trying to avoid recognition by looking as unlike himself as possible, all the while making feeble calculations as to how much he will be compelled to pay, and ready to explode with wrath at his " dearest life's " turning him into a public exhibition through her indiscreet loitering.

Then, as they walk up the long emporium, in vain does he try his utmost to look unconcerned and return the steady gaze of the fifty gentlemen behind the counters who impudently stare at the unusual customer. Those respectable assistants wink to one another, for they are pleased at heart when ladies bring their husbands with

them, knowing, as they do, that he is in for it heavily.

It will be a long affair, and the counter will be piled up with silks and cambrics; the "jumper" will for ever be showing something in the newest style, at extremely low rates, and dear Martha will pretend to hesitate, just to test the generosity of her lord and master; but she and the "young man" will so manage the business that the martyr will be ashamed to refuse.

He will sit wriggling on a cane stool not larger than a cheese-plate—poor support for one in his uncomfortable position—and try to look as if money were no object, and he rather liked making expensive presents. But when at last those beautifully-soothing words, "Nothing else to-day, thank you," have been spoken; when the bill has been calculated and handed to the nearest "assistant" to see what he thinks of the counting; when the cashier has brought back the change out of the cheque, then will the victim spring from his cheese-plate and look the picture of the liberated slave with the chains dropping away.

As he sniffs the delicious street air he turns fiercely upon dear Martha. "What on earth did you mean by buying all those confounded things?" he asks.

She, with a look of injured and astonished innocence replies, "Now, my dearest love, pray be reasonable. Didn't I appeal to you every time?"

"I never heard of such a thing!—Appeal to me," he howls; "what was the use of appealing to me? What could I do or say with all those jabbering jackanapes looking on? Nonsense; you knew it!"

Then the lady is pained to the quick, and, in a voice brilliant and rapid from emotion, exclaims, "I will not be accused of extravagance in this vulgar and cowardly manner, John! I insist upon your going back to the shop and telling them you will not have these things! No John, dear, you shall never say that I am guilty of extravagance. So cruel, and so thoroughly uncalled for!"

After this John retires into the sulks and refuses to be comforted until dinner is over and


the port wine trickles into his hard, cold heart, when, just as his cheeks begin to flush, the parcel is adroitly opened, and whilst the lady "buys her bargains o'er again," John is blessed for "a dear generous darling;" and all is forgiven, and in a month or two forgotten.

But if poor men look such miserable objects when out shopping, how excessively well the women appear under its exciting influence! With some poor creatures the popping in and out of linendrapers' shops has grown into a morbid passion beyond control, and a thousand stories have been told of this intoxicating indulgence.

A gentleman in the employ of Messrs. Civil and Cross (made-up skirts department) informs us that for years their establishment was pestered by a very lively creature who would spend the entire afternoon examining the most recherché assortment, keeping two or three of the establishment on the perpetual trot, and invariably terminated her sport by saying that she had "not quite made up her mind about the dress,

but would take a penny packet of the best patent-eyed needles."

Another gentleman, holding an appointment under Messrs. Swandown and Headgear, relates that one of their *clientèle*, the wife of a renowned general practitioner in the neighbourhood, was such a fearful martyr to kleptomania that she would steal anything upon which she could lay her hands, filling her pockets like any clown in a pantomime, and even attempting to conceal under her shawl rolls of flannel fatter than cannon; but, in the hope of eventually restoring this interesting sufferer to reason by a mild gratification of her evil propensities, the firm had entered into an arrangement with her heart-broken husband to take back all the stolen goods at a considerable discount; and that this philanthropic idea had answered so well that several eminent physicians approved of it, and invariably recommend their shoplifting patients to undergo the curative process at their establishment. To this day, nineteen highly-respectable ladies and a retired dancing-master are entered as patients on their books, and keep



the "slightly soiled" department in constant activity.

Considered as a street, Oxford Street is decidedly not an attractive thoroughfare. It is a useful omnibus and cab route, but not a pretty lounge for a delicate-minded idler saturated with elevated theories of the beautiful.

At the Tottenham Court Road end the smell of brewing, though said to be wholesome, is apt to weary the most stubborn nostril when unvaried by other perfumes; and the sixpenny "correct-likeness" artists and the penny-ice Italians have put to flight every *flâneur* of sentiment; for the sight of the smudge fog-to-graphs and those dreadfully unnaturally crimson-and-white dummy plaster ices, to say nothing of waggons laden with steaming grains, is enough to disgust one with civilisation, the fine arts, and milkwalks.

Neither, it must candidly be confessed, do we admire those wonderful little drapers' shops where iron-wire crinolines and pendants of cheap cottons, at 2s. the dress, float about the brick-

work, for, fanciful as the idea may be, it is as a decoration unsuccessful, as an advertisement, vulgar, and, as a display of female attire, indelicate. . Indeed, we consider that Oxford Street only begins to know how to behave itself about Berners Street; and thence, as far as the Circus, it is decidedly amusing.

But beyond that long crossing, where so many poor women are every day frightened to death by the wicked omnibus-drivers, the thoroughfare relapses into a sad deadly lively, struggling respectability which, near to the Marble Arch, is heartrending, for as if it were ashamed of its struggling shops it has taken to letting lodgings. Oxford Street is too long. It has weakened itself by overgrowth. But, like a shoulder of mutton, there is just one part which everybody enjoys; we refer to the middle cut, between Berners Street and the Circus.

Here are shops which, as valerian draws cats, attract the pretty women of London and keep them fidgeting about the sweet silks and tasty ribbons hung up behind the plate-glass. To look at the shops seems to be one of the neces-

sities of female life. The innocent creatures make up parties to go out and see "what is being worn." Girls in the country write to their friends in town and beg for descriptions of the mercers' windows.

A very intimate nobleman of ours, living in the country, had for a wife a pretty, interesting creature, who was quite thrown away upon a rustic life, and she, poor thing, was seized with melancholia, and nothing seemed to do her good. Music and boiled chicken didn't cheer her; whist and calves'-foot jelly made her worse; and reading and Iceland moss gave her the creeps.

The doctors were puzzled, and one after another declared that medicine was useless, and she must die unless some new means were discovered for keeping her alive.

In a paroxysm of marital devotion her husband, on bended knees, implored her to confide in him and think of something that would do her good.

It required a struggle before she could speak,

and at last the interesting sufferer confessed that "a good look at the shops might soothe her dying moments."

The sweet invalid had actually been pining away for want of a glimpse at those ready-made skirts at three guineas the robe, those cashmere and real Indian shawls, and the other delightful fallals in the mantle way.

Nineteen yards at five and eight restored her mind to its proper balance.

Oxford Street is a good street for studying the women "doing" their shopping, because the Emporiums, Magasins, and Establishments are close together, and the display in the windows is so enormous that the emotions peculiar to the amiable sex are constantly aroused. There is the artificial-flower shop, where the girls invited to parties go for their wreaths. How on earth any fragile creature can be induced to surmount her head with such jack-in-the-green sort of ornaments as are exhibited at this establishment is entirely a matter of private feeling; but some of the decorations contain vegetable matter suf-

ficient to feed a pony, and the streamers hang down for yards.

You will hear, outside this shop, old ladies who ought to know better, speaking in raptures of wreaths of roses that are large enough for a circus hoop, and declaring that they "must have one of them." Mothers of families gloat in delight over circlets of water-lilies and water-cress—a good wheelbarrow full—and cry out aloud, with piercing emphasis, "How becoming!"

This shop is an especial favourite with ladies about to enter the holy state of matrimony, and occasionally the bride's wreath and veil surrounded by those of the bridesmaids, all ready to be sent home at nightfall, are kindly exhibited in the plate-glass windows to admiring thousands.

Such a sight is very beautiful, and helps to purify the heart, especially as it reminds the sweetly pathetic countenances around that there is no telling how soon it may be their turn, and that they should ever be prepared for the heart-rending trial.

Of course the drapers' shop windows are the

most interesting for the lounge's contemplation; but they are usually too crowded for comfortable study; and the women, in their enraptured gazings, push and jostle the philosopher most rudely, so that deep meditation is almost impossible.

The art-criticisms on the goods are simple as the draper's own placards, "sweet" and "lovely" taking the place of "rich" and "distingué." The discussions as to making-up have also their interest, the question of with or without flounces or with a double skirt rarely meeting with opposition or leading to angry feeling.

About three o'clock on a sun-bright day, when the awnings are lowered and the broughams draw up, and delicate beauties, who haven't "a thing fit to wear," step forth, dressed to the extreme extent of fancy millinery, and lounge into the shops to see if there is anything that will tempt them—that is the right time for enjoying Oxford Street: for then it is in its full swing of business, and you may see more pretty faces in one hour than you would meet with in any other country in a six-months' voyage of discovery.

On a certain day in the month of May, the Beadles of London are called upon to officiate at a most important ceremony—one upon which the parochial peace and happiness for the next twelve months in a great measure depends.

On this appointed morning in May, the metropolitan Bumbles wake early, roused from their slumbers by the anxiety and cares of office. They know that the eye of the public is staring hard at them—they feel that the dark lantern of opinion has been turned full upon their behaviour. They sigh as they brush their gorgeous cocked hats.

Nobody understands better than Mr. Bumble how necessary it is that the limits of a parish should be accurately defined.

In leading forth the detachment of little charity boys who are to beat the bounds, he is assisting in no mere pompous display of power, but actually protecting his parish from the rapaciousness of upstart paupers. Unless it can be clearly proved where St. Pancras ends and Marylebone begins, how are settlements to be disputed or out-door

relief refused? Unconsciously, St. James might be serving out its nutritious gruel and delicate bread to paupers who should have feasted at St. Martin's expense.

We have often met with these detachments of charity boys, headed by a noble bouquet-ornated Beadle, making the rounds of the parish. They are usually accompanied by the curate—the one who receives the £80 a-year. He is dressed in his white robes, and by his bland smile hopes to impress lookers-on with the belief that his presence on the occasion was entirely a matter of option with him.

The yellow-legged charity boys carry long wands, and at first sight the inexperienced beholder might imagine that he had fallen in with an eccentric fishing-party.

But presently the procession nears a corner house, against the walls of which a small iron tablet has been fastened. This is a boundary mark. The quick eye of Bumble sees it, and raising his massive-headed staff, he orders his close-cropped lads to halt and prepare for action. Delighted at the novelty of having to beat,

instead of being beaten, the lads impatiently await the signal for attack from their great captain, who has prudently retired to a slight distance, perhaps awed by the malicious sparkle that lights up the eyes of the youths.

A hand that has grown fat and fair in the parochial service is raised, and then with a shout, such as greets the sight of a kitchen chimney on fire, the boys fall to, bravely as carpet beaters, sparing no rod and spoiling no boundary, but thrashing the bricks with an energy that—if walls had tongues as well as ears—would make the old brickwork roar and howl like a full-voiced babe on washing night with soap in its eyes.

This ceremony, as practised in our time, has lost all its picturesqueness through the absurd costume worn by the children of charity. To our mind, the parish boy's uniform has the great disadvantage of allowing too much of the youths' legs to be visible, especially at an age when his tender years have not permitted the calves to be properly developed, and this coupled with the yellow hue of the knee-breeches, imparts to the

uninteresting wearer somewhat the look of a young fowl. Thin legs are never pleasing—in a highly poetical sense—but when paucity of flesh is joined to an unreasonable] gaudiness of nether raiment, the effect produced upon the gazer is most unsatisfactory.

We are told that Rogation Week—the time when these parochial perambulations take place—is always the week next but one before Whit Sunday, and so called because on the Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, Rogations and Litanies were formerly used. Fasting and abstinence were enjoined by the Church, and religious processions ordained. The primitive custom was for the people to accompany the bishop, or some of the clergy, into the fields, where Litanies were made and the mercy of God implored that He would avert the evils of plague and pestilence, that He would send them good and seasonable weather, and give them in due season the fruits of the earth.

Of the magnificence of these processions in former times, some idea may be formed by the

account given of the banners belonging to Christ Church, Canterbury. They were of velvet and rich stuffs, embroidered with gold, and adorned with the arms of the king and the different nobles, who held large estates in the county, and were staunch defenders of the faith.

In the year 747, Cuthbert, Archbishop of Canterbury, ordered that "Litanies"—that is, "Rogations," should be observed, by the clergy and all the people, with great reverence, on the 7th of the Calends of May, and that they should be accompanied with fastings and humiliations. Also, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, an injunction was made, ordering the curate at certain and convenient places to admonish the people "to give thanks to God in the beholding of God's benefits, for the increase and abundance of His fruits." The psalms to be repeated on these solemn occasions are duly given; and the minister is also commanded "to inculcate such sentences as, 'Cursed be he which translateth the bounds and doles of his neighbour.'"

It would appear that the wicked people, instead of attending to these ordinances, grew negligent

of their religious duties, and preferred devoting the holiday to love-making and pic-nics; for in a sermon in the "Crosse dayes, or Rogation dayes," we find the following complaints:—"Alacke for pitie! these solemne and accustomable processions be nowe growen into a right foule and detestable abuse." Great complaint was made that the men and women for the "most parte" came rather to set out and show themselves, and to "passe the time with wayne and unprofitable tales and merry fables," than to make supplications to God "for theyr lackes and necessities." The reverend gentleman, by stating that he will not mention certain abuses, cleverly manages to catalogue the backslidings of his flock:—"I wyll not speake of the rage and furour of these uplandysh processions and gangyngs about, which be spent in ryotyng and in belychere." He also refers to the unbecoming manner in which the banners and badges of the cross are irreverently handled, so that "it is merveyle God destroye us not in one daye."

From this same pastor we learn what was to be prayed for in these Rogation festivals:—

"That God, of His goodnes, wyll defende and save the corne in the felde, and that He will vouchsave to pouрге the ayer; for this cause be certaine gospels read in the wyde felde amonges the corne and grasse, that, by vertue and operation of God's word, the power of the wicked spirites which keepe in the air and infecte the same (whence come pestilences and other kyndes of disease and syknesses) may be layde downe."

The censures of this fervent clergyman do not seem to have met with such success as they deserved. The people still remained hard-hearted and continued their courting and feasting. "What say ye to processions in gang-daies, when Sir John saith a gospel to our corne-feldes?" asks Michael Wodde in his "Dialogues" (1554): to which one Oliver rudely answers, "As for your Latine gospels, read to the corne, I am sure the corne understandeth as much as you, and therefore hath as much profit by them as ye have—that is to sai, none at all!"

Shaw's "History of Staffordshire" contains the most precise account extant of how these

processions were practised of old. The sacrist, resident prebendaries, and members of the choir, assembled at morning prayer on Monday and Tuesday in Rogation Week with the charity children bearing long poles clothed with all kinds of flowers then in season. When the procession was formed, it proceeded to parade the streets with great solemnity, the clergy, singing men and boys, dressed in their sacred vestments, and chanting in "a grave and appropriate melody" the canticle "Benedicite, omnia opera," &c.


In the "Articles of Enquiry within the Diocese of Chichester, 1637," is the following question:—"Doth your minister yeerly, in Rogation weeke, for the knowing and distinguishing of the bounds of parishes, and for obtaining God's blessing upon the fruites of the ground, walke the perambulation, and say or sing in English the Gospells, Epistels, Letanie, and other devout prayers, together with the 103rd and 104th Psalmes?"

A most ingenious method for perpetuating the recollection of particular parish boundaries on the minds of the young, was a hundred years ago

devised by the churchwardens of Chelsea, and sixty years later imitated in the parishes of Norwich and other outlying places. At every mark denoting the limit, a boy was soundly whipped, or a bucket of cold water was discharged at him, he being certain never afterwards to forget the spot at which he suffered so remarkably: and should any dispute hereafter arise with a neighbouring parish, the unhappy lad was certain to prove an invaluable witness, and to give such evidence as no cross-examining could shake.

To show the perseverance ever displayed by parochial authorities to promote the welfare of their parish at the expense of anybody, we may refer to a most extraordinary action for damages which in the year 1830 was brought against the parishioners of Walthamstow.

It would appear that a gentleman was one day seated on the banks of the Lea, quietly fishing, and enjoying that wonderful quietude and blissfulness of mind which all anglers since Walton are known to have experienced. He kept his eyes so intently fixed upon his bobbing float, that he did not notice a band of malicious yellow-



legged parochial ruffians creeping up towards him.

Urged on by the Beadle, the valiant charity-boys seized the pensive angler. He was carried to a stone bridge and with legs and arms firmly clasped by his assailants, he was bumped like a battering-ram against the corner and boundary stone. To use the complainant's own words, "His agony was such that at every fresh concussion he felt as if he would be knocked through himself and come out backwards." The sufferer, who asked for bumping damages, recovered £50.

Another mode employed for impressing the situation of the boundaries on the memory of man, is described by a Mr. Barnes. A man was brought forward as a witness to prove that a certain stream was the boundary of the parish. "Now, sir," exclaimed the barrister, "can you swear to this stream being the boundary-mark?" "Ees, I can," replied the man; "I'm sure o't by the same token that I were tossed into't, and paddled about like a rat, till I wor hafe dead."

It has been proved by actual experiment that to achieve the absolute perfection of female beauty the united charms of one hundred of the finest creatures in the world are required—their selected superiorities being condensed into one unrivalled result.

When blue dahlias abound in our front gardens, or (to use a more homely and essentially feminine prophecy) when tom cats of tortoiseshell outnumber those of tabby or black, then, and not until then, shall faultless beauty in woman rejoice the eyes of men.

There are, it is well known, no ugly women; but even the most poetic and grateful worshipper *must* admit that some of the delicious sex are prettier than others, or, to indulge in the trite comparison of a gentleman trading in Mincing Lane, wholesale loveliness does not run as even as peas in a sack.

That he might sculpture a perfect Venus, the imaginative Phidias caused to be gathered together (Pericles being agreeable) a flock of the most fascinating darlings in Greece, and from

their multitudinous gifts he concocted a goddess. Like unto one walking in a choice garden, and gathering from the flowers around none but the sweetest blossoms, so did the high-art Phidias, in his paradise of loveliness, cull from his blooming models none but the rarest of Nature's tid-bits.

From Niobe he stole an eyelid and from Cassandra he plucked a sidelock, whilst the little finger of Tutia rejoiced his heart, and he breathed inspiration from Selma's dimple. Thus was Nature's dissected puzzle of beauty put together and the hundred fragments harmoniously jointed.

But, alas! when the overwhelming perfection before which men were to bow down was ready for their adoration, the benighted heathens mingled groans with their prayers to think that the wives of the world, so tender and true, should be surpassed in beauty by an image of marble, so cold and hard.

These sculptors do abominable mischief. They certainly elevate the taste and educate

the eye; but what, we will ask, is the use of making mankind discontented with the beauty they possess by instructing them in loveliness which never can be met with? As well might a Lombard Street banker endeavour to elevate the tastes of parish paupers by lecturing on the delights of turtle dinners.

There is really something exquisitely spiteful in the very idea of instructing the world too highly in such art-revelations, for it only tends to expose the defects of many a fair innocent who, until then, may have passed for perfection. Imagine the feelings of Rudolph, who, after adoring the soft voice of his sweet Janet, and basking in the calm light of her eyes, is suddenly awakened by a high-art lecture, and discovers that his darling's proportions are unworthy of his instructed affections. Because gentle Kate hath a clumsy ankle, is she never to be loved? Is dear Maria to die a withered spinster because a "six" glove is too small for her "seven-and-a-half" hand? Certainly not—at least so long as we live in a Christian land.

What a mercy, what a comfort is it, that it has been permitted to man to love according to his own tastes and in despite of the art-rules of the academies! The plainest woman that for many centuries has startled civilisation was the late Mdme. Julia Pastrana, a lady so unfortunately ill-favoured, that for the small charge of one shilling she comforted the entire female sex; for as the visitor, however uninteresting, stood beside the black phenomenon the comparison of charms was full of consolation to the pale face.

That undoubtedly plain lady did more good in her day than the Venus of Phidias has worked in ages. Instead of causing jealousy, she shed happiness around her.

Whenever a poor wife observed, or, what is the same thing, fancied she observed, that the tenderness of her lord had abated; or if she caught him gazing too eagerly on the attractions of complete strangers, she could speedily cure him of his gallivanting propensities and chastise his wicked spirit by coaxing him into a visit to the afflicted Julia.

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On beholding the extraordinarily repulsive features of the hirsute shilling's-worth, even the most wandering love returned affrighted to its legitimate bosom-home. Many were the silent prayers of thankfulness offered up by penitent deceivers that fate had spared them the infliction of a charmer encumbered with the unnatural whisker; and so grandly did back-sliding husbands rejoice in the blessings of a pink-skinned bride, that many a subdued inconstant, in gratitude for his marital lot, would, on leaving the exhibition room, tenderly embrace his wife in the outer passage, and, with impressive gallantry, insist on a peace-offering of strawberries and cream at Grange's, hard by.

Julia is dead, and, if report speaks truly, she has since been embalmed and re-exhibited. For the good she wrought she met with a womanly reward—she was, in spite of her face, married. High-art rules could not condemn her to die unwedded. If her countenance repelled, even unto the scaring of crows, her figure was perfect and attracted admiration. Costumed in a pleasant ballet toilet of sky-blue satin, she controlled

her pirouettes with the consummate grace of a Carlotta Grisi. The young man who took the checks at the door became madly enamoured of her Cachuca. Interesting and handsome, his advances met with a modest response, and Julia, overcome by emotion, muttered the fatal "If you please."

We have now lying before us a testimonial which, unsolicited, was sent to the good Pastrana by a grateful wife. We will print it in full.

"I had for months been suffering from a disordered establishment, originally caused by a severe fall out with my husband, which, at the time I imprudently thought nothing of, declining to follow any advice for the recovery of his affections. I regret to state that Mr. Perky neglecting the usual remedies for a bruised spirit, I indulged in airs which ultimately produced a coldness, and, before long, led to alarming symptoms of great mortification and threatened violent eruptions of broils. Terrible to say, I was given up by my own faculties. For nights and nights I was determined that Mr.

Perky should not enjoy the blessings of my sleep. My appetite, when he was present, entirely failed me. The moment I caught his eye my looks betrayed excruciating torments. These attacks were certainly aggravated by wrong treatment, and were succeeded by a violent thirst for revenge; so that Mr. Perky, in the vain hope of checking my obstinate complaints, administered doses of remarks extremely bitter and most difficult to swallow.

“ Eventually finding that nothing afforded me relief, I sought other advice, calling in a lady enjoying a most extensive practice of interfering in other persons’ affairs. On hearing my case she instantly suggested that Mr. Perky should undergo your love-cure process, insisting on a visit to your admirable establishment and a trial of your electrical effects. The first visit acted like my charms. I was nearly restored to my former position. A second séance gave me such strength I could sit up and dictate my own terms. A third completed the recovery of all my power, and I am now, thanks to you, able to walk every day as far as Lewis and Allenby’s

without experiencing the least difficulty in settling the bill. Yours, ever grateful,

“THURSA PERKY.”

Had it been permitted unto the enthusiastic Phidias to have flourished in the present day, and had the honour of his acquaintance and showing him about London been vouchsafed unto us, we fancy we could have indulged him in a finer display of female loveliness than any assortment which the art-commissioners of Pericles were able to select.

The fair maids of modern Athens, although Byron yielded to the fascinations of one of them in three sweet stanzas, do not give evidence of the beauty of the ancient race; either to-day has sadly fallen off, or olden time was not worth looking at. The sublime features which adorned the statuary of ancient Rome may yet be commonly seen, unwashed but beautiful, in the Eternal City. But the Hellenes of the eighteenth century bear no resemblance to the marble records of their comely ancestors.

We were once present at a meeting which was

attended by many Greek ladies of fashion, celebrated in their native land for their fascinations, but we must confess we could gaze on them and draw our breath with Quaker-like serenity. The countenances were too Eastern for our palpitations. The almond-and-raisin effect of the eyes and complexion did not feast our emotions so luxuriously as the peach-and-cherry delights of English cheeks and lips. Our heart was as calm as a sleeping dove, not even one flutter disturbing its rest, and we had no occasion to solicit in impassioned rhymes the return of our vital pump.

If the selected fair ones that inspired the labours of Phidias were not more overwhelming than the belles of the Hellenic meeting, we with confidence assert that we could within the limits of a shilling cab fare have shown unto the immortal sculptor a thousand beauties a thousand times more beautiful than the selected models for his Venus by merely ordering the driver to proceed slowly up Regent Street.

But, above all, we would have taken him on a bright afternoon, in the spring time of the year, to that delightful exercising-ground where the delicate ones canter over the soft earth in search of admiration and an appetite for dinner : that wonderful mile of beauty with bright eyes and flushed cheeks, christened, by some inexplicable absurdity, Rotten Row.


There we would have requested our Phidias (though we do not speak his language fluently) to lean over the iron railing and command his feelings. There we would have watched his expressive features as he gluttonised on the beautiful. How many of such amazing Amazons would have sufficed for his next Venus? One hundred? He could have sculptured every goddess in Olympus from half the number.

It is decidedly a very delicious indulgence to take a penny chair and enjoy the marvels of human perfection at the exhibition of Rotten Row. We delight in the sight of those proud silly horses submitting, despite their show of

strength and the defiant archness of their necks, to be held in command by a little fist scarce large enough to hold a pigeon's egg. As we contemplate the horsemen and horsewomen caracol-ling along so easily, we devoutly wish the blessings of ten thousand a year had been permitted to us, that we might join the pleasant company and amble over the noiseless ride, chatting with the fairest.

Even the grooms that follow behind their fair mistresses at such useless distances, we regard with envy, and spitefully inveigh against their plaster of Paris legs—those singular tightly-fitted thighs, which ought to burst with a loud report and shrivel up, bladder-like.

There are moments at Rotten Row, when to cure our melancholy we turn to commerce for comfort, and attempt to value the dancing, prancing steeds—pricing the bay or the chestnut at—say—three hundred, and not dear at the price. A fair creature, facing the breeze, glides past with pink cheeks, little thinking that half a yard of rippling hair is floating over her shoulders. The long habits flap and



crackle, the horses snort and insultingly send spray into our face, the voices chirp and chatter, and ride away. Every creature is happy but the unlucky looker-on, who wishes he could join in the fun, and lean over his saddle and flatter the girls.

Rotten Row must be more than one mile in length, for the horsemen in the distance, trotting up the rising ground that leads towards Kensington Gardens, appear like black specks, scarcely to be distinguished from the shadows they cast. The place reminds you of a riding-school where flirting is allowed.

There are so few spectators, that there is an air of privacy, as if it were a practising-ground. The ride has been covered with a soft earth that takes the impressions of the hoofs, spotting it like a sheep-walk. It gives you the notion that it has been placed there to ease the falls of any of the pupils who may be thrown from their saddles.

The wonderful dandies hanging over the railings in Rotten Row, go there to fascinate the ladies, and are all open to good offers; but there

are hundreds of modest-minded mortals, who, happy as at a circus, have come to see and admire the horses. It is a sight as peculiar to England as a procession of charity children or a brewery. What heavy cheques have been signed for each of those proud, straight-backed, ambling animals! What care has been bestowed to polish up those hides, and trim those fetlocks, so as to render them fit to appear in the *haute société* of the Park! They are of all colours and mixtures of colours.

A chestnut cob, with a full bright eye, standing out as a door handle, ambles past, moving his ears backwards and forwards as quickly and suddenly as Punch does his arms. A brown horse, with a rounded neck shining like polished mahogany, walks past, looking frowningly on the ground as if he saw snakes. He seems angry at having a master on his back, and insists on looking sulky. Sometimes he turns sideways and prances, as if to remonstrate against the power that governs him. Or else a handsome beast—black with white legs, like an onyx stone—darts by, tossing the foam into

the air, and blowing through his nostrils with fierce pride. He throws out his legs straight from him like a boxer hitting.

An old gentleman approaches on an iron-gray cob, which goes sideways, like a boat adrift. The old gentleman is heavy, but the cob is sturdy and fresh, and shakes and tosses his venerable load, until his watch-seals, shirt-frill, and full stomach threaten to break loose and come off. The ladies' horses are quieter, having been politely educated. Their thin fetlocks bend like springs, to ease the jolting, and the only prank they indulge in is in stretching out their necks, and suddenly dragging forward the slender arm and small hand that holds the reins.

Sometimes parties of ladies and gentlemen, six or seven abreast, advance at full gallop silent and compact as a body of cavalry under orders to charge into and disperse the carriages drawn up at the entrance to the ride; others, in groups of twos or threes, are slowly walking their horses, keeping close to the side rails, and chatting as well as the jolting of the animals will permit them.

This chatting seems to depend entirely upon how such parties are composed. When it is a papa accompanying his daughters, it is curious to remark how silent the young ladies are: they look about them, pat their horses, arrange their dress, do anything but converse together; but occasionally, one of these groups goes past, the ladies laughing and speaking so loudly, that at a distance you could imagine they were quarrelling with the young fellow leaning sideways over his saddle, and looking up admiringly into their faces. He is too attentive to be a brother, and they laugh too much, and reply too coquettishly, for him to be a relation of any kind.

Most ladies look well on horseback. The hat allows the greater portion of the hair to be seen—always a blessing. The veil gives mystery to the countenance, assisting the ugly, and making the pretty appear vexatiously beautiful. Then the tightly fitting body of the habit shows off the delicacy and movement of the fragile figure, whilst the folds of the long skirt floating in the air, give a lightness to the form, already

rendered graceful from the half-crouching attitude required by the saddle. Some of the ladies wear beaver or velvet wide-awakes, ornamented with a bunch of plumes; others low-crowned hats, with falls around from the broad brim. A bright neck-ribbon relieves the monotony of the even-tinted cloth habit, whilst the white glove gives a finish to the general appearance. Occasionally, when these ladies trot along the ride, the breeze will force on one side the thick folds of the skirt, and indulge you with a peep at a small polished leather boot, resting in the bright steel stirrup. It is not much, but it is soothing!

On the other side of the Serpentine, the scene is very different. There the carriages are moving slowly up and down the road, and thousands of dandified spectators hang over the railings that edge the footpaths, looking at each face that is driven past. Whilst we were standing in Rotten Row, we thought nothing could be more beautiful than the graceful Amazons galloping past us; but now we are in the carriage-drive, we feel con-

vinced that a lady in a carriage looks immeasurably the better of the two.

Those bonnets perched on the back of the head, with the lace edges resting on the broad bands of smooth, glossy hair; the delicate cheek, half crushing the flowers fastened around it; the lazy, silken form reclining so gracefully on the soft cushions of the barouch, present to us a pleasanter and cooler picture than that of a young lady being bumped in her saddle, until the blood is hammered up into her face, and she hasn't sufficient breath to say thank you for a compliment.

The pretence for this delightful exhibition is that of "taking the air;" but, of course, that is not the true object of the drive; indeed, many persons living at Norwood, Finchley, and Highgate, leave their purer atmospheres, merely to take a turn round the Serpentine, and let the world see how rich and handsome they are.

This fashionable meeting might almost be called a "Ladies' Show." The gentlemen stand on each side of the carriage-way, and hanging over the rails examine the countenance

and costume of each female exhibitor. The prolonged stare or the raised eye-glass is the only kind of applause indulged in. The audience is usually a quiet one, seldom expressing its admiration in words, however beautiful the features of the passer-by may be.

What a vast amount of money and ingenuity have been expended to render these Hyde Park exhibitions complete and attractive! The milliners and dressmakers of Paris and London have made fortunes out of that afternoon's drive. Horses have been rendered useless for all other work, that they might learn how to throw out their legs with grand action on that mile of macadam. It is the "Longchamps" of London — a large parade-ground, where a bonnet with a new shape or trimming, or a dress with a new flounce or bodice, will attract a crowd of eyes, and furnish patterns for the next purchase or small talk for the drawing-room.

There are green carriages picked out with white, and blue carriages picked out with red; spinach and pea-green, Prussian blue, and cobalt-

coloured vehicles. There are yellow carriages with black stripes like a wasp's body; and wicker-work phaetons, which may be light, but are too much like hampers to be elegant; and broughams, with every contrivance of springs, some very near the ground, others high up, as chariots; and mail-phaetons, with two grooms with folded arms, like Napoleons in livery, seated behind; and heavy landaus, with chintz furniture big as bedsteads; and elegant cabs with springy shafts, that nearly churn the little fellow holding on behind, and make him dance and jig up and down with the wound-up regularity of a toy; indeed there is every kind of private conveyance, including dog-carts, curricles, gigs, and horse-killers.

One carriage has a bright scarlet hammer-cloth, glowing like a new fire engine, and on it is seated a fat coachman with gay extremities, a flaxen dollish wig, and pink silk stockings. On the first inspection he appears indelicately clad and too effeminate, perhaps too lovely. He keeps his eyes fixed on the gray, prancing cattle, as if every other minute he expected

them to bolt off. The "gentlemen" behind have cocked hats and carry long sticks. They resemble dandy beadles with their great-coats off. Their hair is powdered like a miller's on grinding days, their whiskers are bushy, their calves firm, and their bearing aristocratic, as though proud of their profession. They also seem indecently romantic, and too pretty.

A brougham, of evident newness, is walking slowly down the road. By the door rides a gentleman on horseback, who leans down so as to be near the window, where a very lovely but slightly bold face is peeping out. They are talking sentimental nonsense, for the large blue eyes of the lady are turned up towards the ambrosial whiskers of the cavalier with an expression that shows she likes courtship.

A George the Fourth phaeton, with a lady driving, crosses before the brougham. The lady switches the horses with a whip, and makes a noise with her lips as if she were calling a canary. We are hurt to find that the whip is a recent invention, combining with its driving purposes the usefulness of a parasol. The lady

is very pretty, with eyes as large as a fawn's ; but we object to ladies who drive. It makes the hands hard and the arms muscular.

That brougham is a hired one. The lining is dragged and crushed, and the silk curtains to the windows in front have turned to the colour of an over-ripe cherry. Besides, the driver has burst boots on, and jerks his reins like a cabman, half breaking the jaw of the thin, brown horse with the patched collar and string-tied harness. Inside there is an old woman boldly decorated. We look another way.

Many of the servants have black cockades in their hats, looking like ventilators that have become fixed and want to go round. If the liveries are not becoming, they are gorgeous—as witness that stout footman in a blue coat, yellow waistcoat, and crimson-plush breeches, and white stockings. An oilman's shop front could not be decorated in showier colours.

About six o'clock, the multitude look at their watches, and make the best of their way home to dinner. Voices inside the carriages call out to the coachmen "home," and gradually the caval-

cade thins, leaving behind only those who have taken an early dinner, or who are very fashionable, and never touch a knife and fork before eight P.M.

There are good old customs and bad old customs. For instance, every right-minded person should, if he or she would pass a happy year, eat lamb and gooseberries on Easter Monday, pancakes on Shrove Tuesday, and plum-pudding on Christmas-day.

These are, as every lady will agree, good old customs, because the flavour of these several dishes is excellent, and there is great pleasure in complying with an ordinance that both delights the appetite, and calms the mind. But on the other hand, the cruel infliction of that vile repast of salt fish on Ash Wednesday, is a very bad old custom. Even if the sauce that is served up with it, were made with the eggs of Birds of Paradise, it could not impart a decent flavour to the mess, so disgusting is the original compound.

Why this absurd and unpalatable feast should

be so stubbornly persisted in, we never could make out; we can only suppose that Fashion, the most austere of all custom's officers, sanctions and protects it; or else that a generous government started the infliction for the better protection and encouragement of the Newfoundland fisheries.

In a letter to Aubrey, ("Miscellanies," 1714) dated Ascension Day, 1682, is an account of a custom practised at Newnton, in North Wiltshire; where to perpetuate the memory of the donation of a common to that place by King Athelstan, and of a house for the hayward—*i. e.*, the person who looked after the beasts that fed upon the common—the following ceremonies were appointed: "Upon every Trinity Sunday, the parishioners being come to the door of the hayward's house, the door was struck thrice in honour of the Holy Trinity; then they entered. The bell was rung; after which, silence being ordered, they read their prayers. Then was a ghirland (garland) of flowers (about the year 1660, one was killed striving to take away the ghirland) made upon an hoop, brought forth by a maid of

the town upon her neck; and a young man, a bachelor, of another parish, first saluted her three times in honour of the Trinity, in respect of God the Father. Then she puts the ghirland upon his neck, and kisses him three times in honour of the Trinity — particularly [God the Son. Then he puts the ghirland on her neck again, and kisses her three times in respect of the Holy Trinity, and particularly the Holy Ghost. Then he takes the ghirland from her neck, and by the custom, must give her a penny at least, which, as fancy leads, is now exceeded, as 2s. 6d.,” &c.

In all, nine kisses are given, three by the lady and six by the gentleman. King Athelstan must have been a very excellent man to have first thought of such a pleasing custom. We have been to the Crystal Palace on purpose to see his statue, and, judging by it, we should say he was both good looking and kind hearted. Poor monarch! little did he dream that his rebellious people would one day so insult him as to abolish the excellent ceremony that perpetuated his memory and name.

The gift of 1*d.*, after as many as nine kisses, appears, even after consideration, to be both mean and contemptible. It is not at the rate of even one farthing per embrace. Besides, what could a young lady do with a penny? The best thread is three-halfpence a reel, so she could not buy that. She might have a bun, or cross over Waterloo Bridge twice, or treat herself to a peep show. Now, with half-a-crown, the arrangements might be more vast and satisfactory. The Lowther Arcade is open to all purchasers who love jewels. For 2*s.* 6*d.* she might obtain a locket, a ring, a plated fork, a work-box, five pots of pomatum, or a peck of hair pins, all of which would serve to keep alive, for at least a month, the remembrance of the youth who gave them to her.

In 1660, "one was killed striving to take away the ghirland." Poor enthusiast! most likely the young lady was that year unusually beautiful, and this rash man, being madly in love and weak of leg, was tumbled over, and trampled under the feet of her thousand admirers. You might—but we shall not—write a romance or

compose a five act tragedy upon this simple incident.

The greatest impediment that we see to the introduction, now-a-days, of this good old custom, is, that the method of giving this garland was "from house to house annually, till it came round." In such a huge city as London, the thing would be impossible.

Let us suppose that the parishioners of Kennington, wishing to perpetuate the memory of Athelstan, were to endeavour to revive the ceremony. They would assemble] at the door of the person who looks after the beasts on the common; *i. e.*, the beadle who keeps the naughty little boys in order; and the young lady living at No. 1, Susanna Crescent, would be appointed to step forth with the garland round her neck. How many thousand years would it take before No. 46, Mary Cottages, had her turn? The thing is impracticable!

Among the churchwardens' accounts at Lambeth, are the following items of expenditure incurred for one of these Trinity feasts :—

1519. Item, for garlands and drynk for the chylderne on Trenyte even . . .	0	0	6
— To Spryngwell and Smyth for syngyng with the proceession on Trenyte Sunday even	0	0	12
— Item, for four onssys of garnesyng re- bonds, at 9d. the onse	0	3	0

How much “drynk” the poor wretched “chylderne” could have in the present day for 6d., it is beyond us to imagine. Three pints of milk in three pailsful of water might furnish a rich repast for a limited number. In the year 1500, drinking materials were cheaper than they are now; indeed, even up to the year 1760, there were houses in St. Giles’s where a man might, for the small charge of one penny, make himself drunk, and have clean straw to lie upon into the bargain. Thank Providence! the good old times have passed away.

Messrs. Spryngwell and Smyth appear to have acted as the brass band to the proceession. The former gentleman’s name sounds more like that of an acrobat than that of a musician, as if he had been engaged to head the line by walking on his hands instead of singing duets with Smyth.

It took four ounces of ribands to decorate the garland in those times. There is not a servant-maid in Bermondsey, or a lady in Belgravia, who will not carry more in her next Sunday's cap or bonnet. We sigh in vain for primitive simplicity.

JUNE.

Now the sun is fierce, and Rowland advertises his Kalydor; you must dress in muslin or turn to cinders.

Avoid the midday glare if you would escape freckles.

Be careful that shoulders are protected from the scorching rays, for though Lord Nussey was in favour of a baked skin, it, as a rule, is not appreciated.

There is a queer tale told of his lordship falling in love with a Scotch lady whose delicate complexion had been freckled to an extent which can only be compared to the grated-crust effect of a breakfast ham.

The reason assigned by his lordship for this

outrage against fair-fleshed loveliness is sufficiently quaint. He was so ill-favoured that his sentimental impulses, always repulsed, grew beyond his restraint; for, finding that no lady of presence could, even with an effort, return his affectionate advances, he of course was continually falling in love with every fine woman he beheld. Therefore—being so plain that many of the brightest ornaments in the best drawing-rooms objected to look at him—he was at length forced to confess that love was hopeless and gratitude his only chance; and he accordingly selected his painfully freckled bride, observing that a dear lady so outrageously afflicted ought not in reason to expect a husband, consequently her thankfulness to him must eventually ensure her love. They lived many years, and seldom quarrelled more than once a day.

“He that repents him not of his marriage in a year and a day, either sleeping or waking,
May lawfully go to Dunmow and fetch a gammon of bacon.”

OLD ESSEX SAYING.

A good wife was, is, and ever will be, a crown

unto a husband, but, in by-gone days, she might also be a flitch of bacon unto him, if he chose to go down to Dunmow and claim one.

In the year 1854, Mr. Ainsworth published his tale of "The Flitch of Bacon." The inhabitants of Dunmow read the book, and felt their hearts swell within them as they pored over this record of the ancient custom of their native town. The simple word "Bacon" roused them as a war song rouses a Highland Chieftain, and as the notes of the clarion startle and excite the old charger. A meeting was called at the Town Hall, a committee formed, and a resolution passed that so good a custom ought to be revived. A letter was sent to Mr. Ainsworth asking for his co-operation.


How could so poetic a novelist as Mr. Ainsworth refuse? If the Dunmowites were roused, it was his doing. It was he who had caused them to revolt from their every-day tranquillity; it was he who had taught them the war-cry of "Connubial felicity and Bacon!" In answer to their request, the committee received a beautiful letter, containing a promise of five guineas

towards the expenses of the ceremony, and an undertaking to present the Flitch of Bacon to any couple who might claim it.

"The time-honoured custom"—as Mr. Ainsworth persisted in styling a ceremony which had been neglected and dishonoured for nearly a century—was (for one year only) again revived. Any married couple who could conscientiously swear—or, if they had courage and impudence enough, could unconscientiously declare, that they had passed a twelvemonth and a day in perfect harmony and happiness, were to receive as their reward a couple of hundred weight of the mildest breakfast bacon, warranted to be "Dunmow bred, Dunmow fed, and Dunmow cured."

Hitherto music had been the only recognised food of love, but (for that year only) the *carte du jour* was to boast of the addition of bacon.

This might be cooked in a variety of tantalising ways. Fried with eggs, it would remind the wedded lovers of the "yoke" they endured so pleasantly; or boiled with that emblem of immortality—the bean—it would serve as a



token of their everlasting affection; or as an accompaniment to the delicate fowl, it would call up the picture of the gentle hen—the poetic symbol of motherly love.

“To say that a couple ‘deserve the fitch’ is a high compliment,” wrote Mr. Charles Pavey—by order of the committee; “but to say that ‘they have actually won it,’ is to proclaim them amongst the happiest of mankind.” What, then, must be the feelings of the man and wife who have not only won their bacon, but eaten it! How full they must be of love! For the future, Cupid should alter his name to “*Flitcherty* Witchet,” and change his quiver of arrows for a bundle of ham skewers.

For one entire century no claim had been made for the Dunmow fitch. Our forefathers and foremothers must have been very bad husbands and wives. There were Lovelaces and Charles Surfaces in the world then, who could make such deadly love, and say such beautiful things, that no wife was safe. The husbands, too, were very fond of drinking, and a man who can stow away his six bottles of wine, or his ten quarts of beer,

could not, naturally, have much room left in his body for love.

There was more hiccuping than conjugal cooing in those days. The pop of the cork, or the gurgling of the tap, was infinitely preferred to the sound of a wife's tongue. How could a lady, who seven nights a week had helped to carry her rickety spouse to bed, refrain from wishing herself "unmarried again?" How could a gentleman, who discovered his better-half constantly taking moonlight walks with a dashing stranger, avoid "household brawls or contentious strife?"

But mark the difference between 1755 and 1855! Notice how the present generation have purified and filtered, and become sparkling and pure! The mud has settled, we are clear as crystal.

Scarcely had "notice been given" in the local papers that all claimants for the Flitch of Bacon must send in their applications, than the committee was inundated with letters demanding the virtuous reward. They were as numerous as the leaves on a rose, and each one as full as a Dutch woman's skirt. Only fourteen of them were,

however, printed, so the others were unfortunately lost to the world.

Both Mr. and Mrs. — were able, freely and conscientiously, to claim the flitch, and were desirous of doing so long ago, but the postmaster of Dunmow had told them he considered the custom obsolete.

One person was willing to lay his claim before the committee, if it could possibly be done *without requiring his wife to take the oath. He was willing to swear for her as well as himself.*

This struck us as being a mean attempt to purloin the bacon. Perhaps his wife was one of those unfortunate ladies who wish "they had never set eyes on the man." A question might arise, whether he had ever been as willing to swear at his wife as he was now to swear for her.

Another husband wrote, that he was most decidedly entitled to the prize, but he dared not offer his oath in the matter. He was—once—in good circumstances; but though, in the words of the proverb, "poverty came in at the door," love was not mean enough to rush out at the window.

But, alas! he was married at the Registrar's Office, and therefore he and his wife could not swear that "since the church clerk said 'Amen,' they had never wished themselves' unmarried again," for there was no church clerk present at their wedding.

An attempted imposition was most fortunately detected in time to save the wavering fitch. The impostor offered to swear that for *three* years after marriage he had never exchanged an angry word with his wife. The villain was a sailor. He had, one week after the wedding, started on a voyage which lasted three years.

Mr. and Mrs. Blackwell (this poor lady died shortly afterwards), Mr. and Mrs. Barlow, and Monsieur and Madame de Chatelain, also sent in their claims, each of their letters being as redolent of love as if a full bottle of the "Bouquet d'Amour" had been spilt over the writing paper.

To give greater effect to the ceremony, it was determined that the procession to and from the Town Hall should be as gorgeous as possible. The committee cast their eyes around them.

They wanted horses of all colours—some with spots, and all with long tails ; they wanted velvet coats and velvet gowns, and music and chariots. Fame whispered in their ears the name of “E. T. Smith.”

The man who could conjure Drury Lane into a paying property, must be a great man. As he had, strange to say, sent in a claim for the fitch, his address was easily found. That gentleman at once, most obligingly and handsomely, acceded to the proposition. He instantly ordered the property-room to be looked over, and himself pointed out the peasants', beefeaters', and minstrels' costumes to be worn on the occasion. Garlands by the mile, golden-wands by the faggot, and banners by the gross, were carefully placed in packing-cases, and sent off, carriage paid, to Dunmow.

Mr. James Barlow, and Hannah, his wife, were the couple who stood first on the Committee's good books. The only objection we had to this choice was, that Mr. Barlow resided at Chipping Ongar, a town whose name is not only ugly, but positively offensive. It reminds us of big eels.

How such a place, with such a title, could contain a happy pair, was incomprehensible. What was Maydew about? Was Clovernook asleep?

The Chevalier and Madame de Chatelain, are each of them writers of distinction. The lady is of English birth, and the authoress of numerous charming volumes, amongst which we cannot help naming "The Silver Swan" and "The Blind Fisherman."

It was originally intended that only one prize should be given away. But the fact of a French gentleman having sent in a claim, caused the committee to break through this resolution; and, as the bills said, "out of compliment to the Anglo-French alliance," the Chevalier was admitted as a successful candidate for the honour.

This was, it appeared to us, very unjust towards our other Allies. We could understand that, so far as regards the Turks, it would be impossible to show them a similar courtesy. First of all, the great number of wives allowed by the Mahometan religion, precludes the possibility of a perfectly united household; and, secondly, the

Turks do not eat pork. But, why were our fighting friends, the Sardinians, excluded? Perhaps it was considered that those who were at that time battling with us in the Crimea would be too fully occupied in saving their own bacon to care about coming all the way to Dunmow for a slice of Essex pork.

On Thursday, the 19th of July, 1855, the sun would have risen in all his glory, but it rained too hard. At 7 o'clock in the morning the angry sky commenced spitting like a savage cat, as though it were jealous at the constant allusions made by the Dunmow claimants to their lives of perpetual sunshine, and was determined to cloud their boasted happiness for once.

But the sight of a couple who, during fifteen years' wedlock, had never wished themselves unmarried again, is a rare spectacle, compared with which the Edmonton Twins or the Talking Fish are every-day occurrences. When we reached the Eastern Counties Railway Station a long train was already crowded, and the porters were attaching more carriages. In spite of rain, everybody was sentimentally dressed in the most

splendid attire—delicate bonnets, too soon, alas ! to be ruined beyond the hopes of patching up or turning ; silken dresses, that a few seconds in the open air would mark with rain drops, till they should rival in stains the late lamented Mr. Richardson's spotted boy.

The journey down to Bishop's Stortford was an uninteresting one, for the magnificent mountain scenery, if any, was hidden behind the heavy rain. If, however, it was very miserable without, it was very merry within the carriages ; for everybody was full of noble sentiments and unbosomed themselves.

In those compartments where there were ladies, the Dunmow Flitch furnished ample materials for desperate flirtations, which were carried on with considerable warmth and effect, despite the early hour. Where only gentlemen were together, strangers offered each other cigars, and those who did not smoke, made no objection to it, and coughed as seldom as possible. There was no quarrelling, grumbling, or swearing, for every one was under the beneficent influence of the breakfast bacon, and consequently mild.

On arriving at Bishop's Stortford, the troubles began. That place is nine miles distant from Dunmow, and, in order to get over the ground, a number of fashionable furniture vans, and elegant carriers' waggons, with pretty tarpauling coverings, had been provided by one Patmore, the refined landlord of the Railway Inn.

When the people saw these pleasant though ponderous vehicles, with their intelligent though heavy cart-horses, they were astonished; when they were informed that they must clamber up over the muddy wheels, and take their seats inside, on the wet deal planks—they were disgusted; but when, after keeping them waiting for half an hour, Mr. Patmore in person came round for the money, and, charging a preposterous price, told them that, without pre-payment, the driver had orders not to move, then, and not until then, the indignation of the thirty insides knew no bounds (excepting those necessary for jumping out of the waggon), and, in a body, they quitted their now dried seats.

At this critical moment, a good and upright man of the name of Sheldrake came to our aid,

the owner of an open cart and fast trotting mare.

When we reached Dunmow, we found the streets filled with crowds of visitors. Carts and vans, covered over with boughs, were driving into the town; men with trucks of strawberries, and barrows of oysters (love's side-dishes), were hurrying to the fair held on the green; and foot passengers innumerable were besieging the different public houses to propose healths. The proprietor of the inn where that excellent mortal, Sheldrake, put up his mare, exclaimed aloud, that the wet "had played the deuce with we;" but he was ungrateful to grumble, for his customers protested that his ale was bad, and yet his house was full.

Outside the Town Hall there was a mob of several hundred persons. The shops around were all closed, but the windows were wide open, and filled with sight-seers.

The Saracen's Head Commercial Inn had bonnets thrust out of every available opening. On the roof of the houses in front, young gentlemen were clambering over the tiles, evidently as

much delighted with the luxury of getting wet through as with the view they obtained of the soaking populace.

There were drays, waggons, and carriages of all sorts ranged at the corners of the streets to see the procession pass. Somebody had driven up with post-horses, and the postilion in his blue jacket was enduring the pelting shower with a resignation that would have to be dearly paid for in the reckoning.

There were gigs, with their aprons closely buttoned up and the big umbrellas mounted like Covent Garden tents, and carts with the drivers wearing sacks over their heads, arranged like the *cabans* of the Bedouin Arabs. Those on foot were principally countrymen, bachelors and farmers.

The most numerous costume was the green smock-frock, with highly-embroidered shoulder and breast piece, which imparted to the wearer somewhat the appearance of a fine thick-set girl in a pin-a-fore, with her sash untied.

Forcing our way through the wet and silent crowd, we gained the entrance to the Hall. Here

we found, suspended from blue frames, the two fitches—the prize pork of virtue. They had wreaths of artificial flowers twined round them; and, as we gazed upon them, we could not help thinking that by the time the loving couples had managed to devour all that bacon, they would be rather tired of it.

It was two o'clock, and the hall was nearly filled, the greater portion of the audience being ladies. We felt grateful for being under shelter from the rain, which was beating like small shot against the bay window.

It was a little pill-box of a place, scarcely larger than a parish school-room, with white cement walls, oak-painted cross-beams to support the slanting roof, and a little gallery on one side, about the size of an omnibus. In a corner had been erected a green baize jury-box, railed in with the white wands and flower-baskets afterwards to be used in the procession.

A president's chair and table for counsel had also been squeezed into the smallest possible space against the wall.

The jury of virgins and bachelors had already

taken their places, and of course we made it our first duty to examine them minutely. The bachelors we dismiss in a line,—they had their best clothes on, and had greased their hair with great liberality and ostentation, due care being bestowed on the curl that rested—round as an eyeglass—in the centre of the forehead.

But the virgins! It would take a volume to describe them properly—their eyes alone would require an entire chapter, with numerous coloured illustrations. Somebody told us that they, all of them, resided at Dunmow. Why did they hide themselves so far away from London? Why should they live in a place forty miles off, with expensive railway fares to and fro?

Three of the virgins had light hair, varying in tint from a bright amber to a deep rich Margate slipper. They wore their hair brushed back from the forehead, with the loose twisting curls gathered together in a round cushion that encircled the head like a glory of gold. Their eyelids were delicate and transparent as rose leaves, their mouths were only just large enough for mince meat to pass through, and to this day, it

appears to us a miracle how they managed to breathe down their wonderfully minute noses. The other three young ladies were *brunettes*.

Our admiration of the virgins never ceased until Mr. E. T. Smith's bass voice—he was in excellent health—announced the arrival of the Court and Counsel.

Then we tore our eyes away from the lovely jury like a half-stuck postage-stamp from a letter (affecting the head), and looked round the room to compose ourselves. All the other ladies in the hall had mounted on chairs and benches, to have a good look at the president. The bay window was crowded with oval faces and slender figures, and, in the gallery above, the delicate forms bent forward, and up went their eyeglasses like guns.

“We have met,” said Mr. Ainsworth, in his opening address, “to revive the time-honoured custom of the Flitch of Bacon.” He then proceeded to give a rapid historical account of the curious usage, how it was originated in the 12th century, and must therefore be 700 years old. He mixed the Knight Templars up with the

custom, and made France and Germany come forward and bear witness to the truth of his historical assertions. Such a custom, so peculiar, so jocular, ought, he declared, to be upheld; and he gave a thousand and one very excellent reasons to show he was in the right. Besides all this, he proved that there was a gateway in Austria, over which was written,

“ If there be found a married man,
Who will declare, if he can,
That he doth not marriage rue,
Nor have for wife a shrew,
He may this bacon down hew.”

Nobody seemed inclined to doubt the learned president's facts, so he sat down into his comfortable chair again; and then Mr. Robert Bell, the Counsel for the claimants, obliged with a speech.

Mr. Bell had no sooner commenced speaking, than we found he was over in France, in the midst of the Courts of Love. He insisted that these ordeals were very similar to the Dunmow custom, and that therefore the Flitch of Bacon ought not to be neglected. He often referred to “the bright eyes and happy mouths” around him, and made many pointed allusions to the

fair inhabitants of Dunmow, which were loudly applauded.

Mr. Costello, the Counsel for the Court, then rose, and spoke a great deal of valuable and interesting matter, which, unfortunately, we were unable to listen to, owing to a young lady with a lace bonnet and violet strings, suddenly rising up on her chair, and petrifying us with her amazing beauty.

The business of the Court then commenced. The jury answered to their names, and with breathless interest we listened to six out of the twelve responses. The virgin with the amber-coloured hair was a Miss Lydia Collis, the Margate-slipper beauty was a Miss Emily Richmond, and one of the *brunettes* answered to the name of Caroline Bostock. But, alas! where were their addresses?

One of the virgins, mistaking the nature of the ceremony, and no doubt fancying herself before the altar instead of in a packed jury, replied, in a firm voice, "I will." There was a roar of laughter, in which all joined excepting ourself.

The counsel for the claimants then ordered

Mr. James Barlow to step into the witness box, and prove his title to the prize in open court.

In answer to the various questions, Mr. Barlow said : He began life as a servant ; was four years in service as a kind of general servant, footman, coachman, gardener, and errand-boy (laughter)—a kind of factotum, in truth. (Renewed laughter.) He was by trade a bricklayer and builder, and felt satisfied with his condition. He was acquainted with his wife for four years before he married her. Fell in love with her. All their courtship was carried on by letter ; she was 100 miles away. Was not particularly favoured by the sex, but believed he might have had others. (Cheering.) Had never heard of the sympathetic powder which made people fall in love. Had no need of any, and did not use any. Never had a quarrel with Mrs. Barlow—decidedly not. Never differed on any matrimonial point from Mrs. Barlow ; for instance, if, when taking tea his wife said, “James, you’ve had three cups,” he replied, “Very well, my dear.” (Laughter.) Never had any occasion to quarrel about the colour of a new dress for his wife: she always

bought her own things, and what pleased her delighted him. (Cheers from the ladies.) Had never regretted his marriage; his only sorrow was, that the years had flown away so quickly. (Ironical cheers from a demon in the gallery.)

Cross-examined by Mr. Costello.—Chipping Ongar was fourteen miles from Dunmow. They had come over in a public vehicle—came with friends. Didn't get up remarkably early—indeed he never got up early. He was quite ready to start. Didn't keep Mrs. Barlow waiting. If he hadn't been ready, his wife would only have said, "James, don't hurry yourself." Of the two, his wife was ready the first. Was not delayed by any domestic arrangement. Would take his solemn oath he wasn't. No, the keys were not mislaid—certainly not. He had no pecuniary or personal object in view in claiming the fitch. Was not going to sell it again. For himself, he was not over fond of bacon. Dare say Mrs. Barlow enjoyed a slice occasionally; but he never asked how she liked it done, but thought it was with peas. (Cheers.) Yes, he often carried an umbrella; but it was never

mislaid. Mrs. Barlow always put everything again in the right place. (Applause from several old gentlemen.) Usually kept his temper with everybody; but, perhaps,—he might occasionally—

Mr. Bell.—I object to the course of cross-examination my learned friend is pursuing. It has nothing to do with my client's married life.

Mr. Costello appealed to the Court; but his Lordship decided in favour of the objection.

Cross-examination continued.—Mrs. Barlow was in the habit of doing up her back hair at night.

Mr. Bell remarked that the last question was a very serious one. Many ladies wore streamers in their back hair, called in his part of the country "heart crushers."

Cross-examination continued.—He was aware that last winter was a severe one. Sometimes he was first to get into bed, and sometimes Mrs. Barlow was. If he had to warm her place for her, he never grumbled. She often warmed his.

Mrs. Barlow was next called, and entered the

witness-box all smiles and blushes. She is considerably younger than her husband. She stated that her husband first fell in love with her. Had no secrets from him. He was generally of a lively temper—at least with her.

Cross-examined.—Was fond of neatness, and liked the house to be clean; but Barlow never came into the rooms with muddy boots. If he did, it wouldn't matter. (Applause from the gentlemen.) Never remembered him to have spilt gravy or wine on a clean table-cloth. Their chimneys at home did occasionally smoke. Never asked Barlow to alter them, not because she did not admire his building abilities, but because she did not like to trouble him. Mr. Barlow had corns, but when he suffered he never displayed temper. He bore corns with the fortitude of a saint. (Applause.)

Miss Mary Ann Clarke, the first witness, deposed.—Had known Mr. and Mrs. Barlow for fifteen years. Often saw them at home, and had many opportunities of watching them. They were a very happy couple, and she never heard them say an angry word. Had never dined with

them, but frequently tea'd. Had never had any bacon at Mr. Barlow's, but hoped she would now. (Laughter.)

Cross-examined.—Had frequently seen Mrs. Barlow wearing a new bonnet, but had never heard that it was the result of a compromised quarrel. Mrs. Barlow always bought her own bonnets, and as many as she wanted.

Mr. William Nicholas, the next witness, then stepped forward.—Had been twelve years the governor of Ongar Union, and had known the Barlows for ten years. Barlow bore prosperity well, and wasn't lifted high above his fellows in consequence. Had seen Barlow under convivial circumstances, when taking his glass. He knew exactly what point to drink up to. At such moments Barlow unbended himself. Never saw him the worse for liquor. They were a very happy couple.

Cross-examined.—Didn't think he had played a game of whist at Mr. Barlow's house; but would swear he had "speculation." Had seen Mr. and Mrs. Barlow play whist with others; they were always partners. If Mrs. Barlow

trumped her husband's best card, he kept his temper. Never saw a suspicious-looking stick hanging up behind the door.

This concluded the case for and against the couple. The question was then put to the jury, whether the Barlows were entitled to the bacon—when an instantaneous verdict of “O yes, of course,” “I think so,” and “Certainly,” was given in their favour. For three minutes the hall rang with applause and laughter.

The same formalities were then gone through with M. Chatelain and his lady.

The Chevalier said, “He was a French jontlemon, and was married at St. Pancrarce surch in London. It was varree stupeed to say literaree ladees make bad wife. His was a loave match, certanlee. He admired beautifool ladees evaree wheare. Generallee evaree ladee was an object of his admeerarseon, as evaree tree and bierd was also an object of his admeerarseon.”

Now that the examinations were over, we hurried into the open air, and looked for a good place for enjoying the gorgeous procession. We were delighted to find that the sun was shining

in full force, drying the mob and the dirty roads with equal success. In a short time the show was in motion.

First of all came the police, clearing the road by splashing boldly through the puddles. Then followed a Grand Marshal in black velvet and gold lace. Next came yeomen on cream, spotted, and piebald horses. To give a pleasing sentiment to the pageant, ladies passed carrying garlands of artificial flowers, the same that had been so often successful in rendering the Drury Lane ballets attractive. Gentlemen and ladies from Mr. Smith's circus lent effect to the scene, by the variety and mysteriousness of their costumes. The jury were seated in a carriage driven by a charioteer in a chintz dressing-gown. Four gentlemen with wands imparted a fairy-like sprightliness to the *troupe*. The private carriage with the desponding post-boy, whose spirits had been damped by the morning's rain, we now discovered to belong to Mr. Ainsworth.

As he passed along, the multitude roared out their admiration, and raised forlorn hopes in the minds of the rain-stained horses, that they

might be removed from the traces, and the people harness themselves to the vehicle and pull it along in their stead.

The Flitches of Bacon were carried proudly past, swinging heavily from their iron hooks, and making the backs of the four (ham and) beef-eaters who carried them, ache with their wabbling weights.

The happy couples—seated on chairs, and borne on the shoulders of fantastically-dressed foresters—attracted admiration as they clung with a nervous clutch to the wooden sides of their perilous thrones.

There were two bands, both in eccentric costumes, who blew vigorously down their wind instruments, and seemed to be playing a wind match, rather than music. Gigs, carts, vans, farmers on horseback, peasants and populace on foot, closed the long line of the procession.

The oath was to have been administered on the green, but the rush of spectators was so great, that the only oath we were enabled to hear, was from a gentleman who had his coat torn off his back.

The effect of a crisp highly-starched muslin dress upon a man of quick emotions is rapid and startling. The first impulse is to crush it between the arms, and crumple it up like a silver-paper balloon ; but such desires cannot be indulged without the excuse of an affectionate embrace sanctioned by the parents of the young lady.

Is it not beautiful to gaze on the female form, clouded in fluttering gauze, and floating over the ground white and aerial as a puff of steam ? Through the transparent skirt the embroidered petticoat displays its costly work, and the machinery of the little feet may be watched as under a glass-case, with increasing interest. The shoulders are seen through the slight haze of the bodice, and they are delicately fair.

The second impulse with men of fine perceptions is to pat the half-revealed back. This, like the other indulgence, can only be enjoyed after the formalities of a proposal. It is the reward of virtue, and encourages nobility of mind.

There have been instances of demons in

human form who became so enraged at the sight of a muslin dress that they would deliberately place their foot on the skirt and try to tear it. Such a villain was the late Mr. Arper.

The fiendish expression of his eyes, when he heard the rent, is said to have suggested to Mr. Flaxman, the sculptor, his grand idea of the fallen angel. The artist persuaded Mr. Arper to sit to him, and as the work proceeded an assistant in the back room was constantly tearing up muslin.

June is the month for wearing fine clothes, for it abounds in choice opportunities for letting the world see how deeply you have studied the effects of colour, as exhibited in the dress-painting of the human form. Fine feathers help fine birds. There is no instance on record of a girl having been despised for dressing tastefully, and even if there were, what should we care for such a disgusting precedent?

That great and good man, the lamented Marquis D'Opquins (who invented a pomatum) would frequently observe,—“I like a showy dresser,

a good dresser with all her silk spread out—I worship it!”

Such an opinion is particularly worth recording when we remember that the nobleman who delivered it was, as a youth, first page of the Backstairs to the gorgeous Prince Regent, and had frequently assisted his Highness to lace his royal stays.

Let us suppose the case of a young and impulsive girl, wealthy, tasteful, and extravagant. How joyfully must she hail the approach of June! She is to be presented at Court!

She has determined that the June Drawing-room, the best in the year, shall be the scene of her agitation and splendour. For months she has been preparing for this great event. The train is of satin *doré*, the colour *rose des Alpes*, relieved with *plaques brandebourgs* and chenille. A few *bandeaux bouffantes* and the indispensable plumes adorn her fine head. Around her neck rests a necklace of diamonds, the smallest of which would make a burglar happy.

The carriage is at the door; the countess, her aunt, is patiently waiting for her; and Belgrave

Square falls back in admiration as three domestics follow the resplendent creature to the vehicle, carrying the glittering train piled up on the largest tea-tray.

As the brougham rattles along the streets, the foot-passengers stare excitedly, and notice that it is filled with a mass of foaming lace and glimmering satin, from which emerge the white necks and lovely faces of two splendid creatures—the one advanced in years but very delicious, the other at her tenderest period and intoxicating.

At last St. James's Palace is reached, and in time they are among the maddening mob of beauty and refined toilets. They ascend the grand staircase, and find the blood of England assembled to welcome them.

"Who is that fine girl?" inquires the hero of fifty pitched battles, trembling for the first time in his life.

"Heavens! how lovely!" exclaims a renowned statesman—a man who has defied united Europe, now meek as a parish orphan.

The splendour of her train attracts the notice of the lords in waiting, the grooms in waiting, the

extra grooms in waiting, and the masters of the ceremonies. As its graceful owner pulls it after her, kindly rods in office direct its progress, and the ladies of the bedchamber, the extra women of the bedchamber, and the women of the extra bedchamber deliver themselves up to ungovernable envy.

When at last the royal hand is kissed, everybody around the throne remarks that her Majesty trembled violently, and was much moved, and wasn't comfortable until she had sighed profoundly.

Such is the power of beauty, that even royalty submits to its influence—especially George IV.

The glorious day ended, the young and impulsive girl returns to her home, and feels, as her maid relieves her of her train, that her ambition has been indulged, and the world is very beautiful and capitally designed, despite the exorbitant price charged for lace and the barefaced extras of the court milliner.

To mention the numerous instances of girls who have received offers of marriage after presentation would be to suppose that the world

has been asleep, and never noticed the agreeable incidents of life. The question is, what man of taste and pretension to refinement would think of choosing for a life-companion any young lady who had not visited St. James's fascinating Drawing-room.

Without it, beauty, fame, and virtue are valueless in the eyes of "*ton*,"—indeed, as Sir Frank Harmstrong cleverly remarked, no education is perfect unless the divine one can read, write, and has been presented at court. Oh, girls of England, look to this!

Count Arlkin, the famous Dutchman, who had a distinct pair of trousers for every day in the year, fell so frightfully in love with a lady he saw at a Drawing-room, that he was raving mad for nearly a week, and insisted on eating ostrich-feathers.

He would have perished, if his physician had not hit upon the ingenious device of first steeping them in pale brandy.

On his recovery, the lady consented to soothe his sorrows; and, to reward her self-sacrifice, he presented her with a deed of gift, which conveyed

to her in her own right, and to her descendants for ever, seven hundred windmills.

A clever young poet, by trade a mason, commenced one of his most popular odes ("To Contentment") with these remarkable words, "I never had a five-pound note." After this most imprudent cash statement the bard, instead of yielding to despondency, actually revels in his small balance, and openly avows his contempt for wealth and the wealthy.

A poet more ridiculous it is difficult to imagine. If, as his own unsolicited confession plainly informs us, he had never been possessed of even so ridiculously small a sum as five pounds, surely he ought to be the very last person who should dare to offer his opinion as to the debasing influence of ten thousand a year. As well might some ragged tramp munching a mouldy crust inveigh against the pleasures of side-dishes and lift up his voice in praise of cold potatoes. Considered as an ode, that ode "To Contentment" is the most discontented piece of contentment that ever appeared in print.

Why poets should feel such extreme disgust for wealth is a mystery which no stockbroker can explain. And, oddly enough, it is not so much their own cash which seems to ferment their venom ; but it is the sight of other people's full purses, and other people enjoying them.

So long as your bard is gazing on a violet or toying with a rose his soul expands with beatitude, and he is delicious to observe ; but the instant a roll of bank-notes meets his eye it dilates with frenzy, and he will abuse the currency shamefully. Nay, so rabid are these poets in their loathing of good money, that they will not admit any owner thereof to be an honest man ; and, when imagining their heroes, they prefer to select some unfortunate creature who trembles when his washerwoman is out of temper.

We once knew a poet who was such a powerful hater that it was quite unpleasant to be favoured with his society. We have known that very poet to insult, in the presence of a crowded chophouse (the Cheshire Cheese) as respectable an old gentleman as anybody could wish to see,

calling him a licentious wretch battenning on Nature's loveliest gifts, merely because the worthy creature had ordered a dish of early peas.

Decidedly this poet's most popular, and most crushing, satire was inspired by the proprietor of a cobbler's shop, who, without thinking of what he was doing, sent in his little bill for repairs.

One very hot summer he offered up a vow that he would revel in the warm heart-blood of the head cashier at the Westminster Bank.

Yet this strange impulsive creature was dotingly attached to a white mouse and several spiders.

Another bard, whom we never wish to meet again, lived on boiled rice for so prolonged a period that his brain was ultimately affected, and he "cast away from his love" his own brother because he imprudently changed a sovereign in his presence. The poet insisted that it was a premeditated insult.

There are, alas! many, too many, excuses to be made for the poor poet, and let us be cha-

ritable and make them. Imagine, then, an imaginative creature, all soul, with a furiously palpitating brain and senses so acute that no luxury can be too delicate for their enjoyment, imagine such a high-minded prodigy gazing on fourpence and wondering where he shall dine.

Perhaps one hour since he was describing the feast of Lucullus or sipping nectar on Olympus, and now he must fall back to reality and jingle his half pence for a meal. How is it possible for him to love his brother man carving, let us say, a duck, and perhaps not hungry—a low, vulgar monster who sips his choice claret with as dull a face as though he tippled table beer?

Were it but the poor poet's lot to plunge the two-pronged fork into the plump breast of that well-browned bird, what bright fancies, what chaste conceits would have filled his mind whilst lifting the luscious slices to his plate! He would have written a poem in praise of that happy, tender duck. Each particular flavour would have been rewarded with a stanza. In gratitude for that great enjoyment he might have forgiven the world its persecutions.

As for the wine, it would have lingered in his mouth as long as dear friends parting.

Each drop would be forced to yield up its fragrance before the farewell swallow; and when the brain felt the gentle fillip of the grape-juice warming the cheeks and lighting up the eye, perhaps that poet, so bitter on fourpence, might have softened on Larose, and, holding the glass up to Nature, he might have re-loved his fellow-man and pardoned him his neglect.

But on fourpence! How can the big-brained man forgive the low wretch who wants not the duck, yet eats it—who knows not the delicate rapture of the claret, yet consumes it?

Thus runs the law—the creature of high impulse and refined perceptions must feed his life with dry bread and yet dream of venison. His scanty dinner over, his stomach, as though insulted by such small supplies, feels like a yawning gulf into which one stone has fallen. As he goes his way he passes the houses of the rich and sniffs the perfume of a thousand dishes. Through the illumined windows he perceives the shadows of forms bending over their plates, he

hears the clatter of knives—and anon the up-raised elbow tells its tale of perfumed sips.

Everybody seems to live better than the poet, who better than all understands good living. A pastrycook, in calico cap and coat, balancing with dextrous grace the ice pudding congealed in cool green box, glides ghostlike down the area steps. Even to gaze on such a delicacy would cheer his drooping heart. The very servants, who cannot write, who cannot spell, and hate grammar, may touch that lovely dish ; they may eat of the good things that come down from the rich man's table ; but he of the lofty mind and giant genius must dine on fourpence ! He shakes the dust from his feet, sighs, and rushes home to write another satire.

Many a time have we thought, earnestly, of getting up a charitable society for the purpose of humanising poets, through the medium of one plain joint with bread and vegetables. The three or four philanthropists to whom we have spoken of this notion have fully appreciated the value of the idea and the truthfulness of the theory ; but an insurmountable difficulty has ever checked

the development of the scheme. If every poet were to be entitled to a dinner, we should require Westminster Hall for our eating-room. Poets would spring up on every side. It would be a glut, a deluge, of Anons and Ibids. Newgate market would scarcely suffice for our humanising larder, and Covent Garden, reduced to its last potato, would have to offer to the verse-writers an empty vegetable dish and an allusion to bay-leaves.

Nothing is more fashionable in high class drawing-rooms than the presence of a poet. To create a sensation he should be thin and look hungry. When you converse about him, and point him out to your friends, always talk in whispers, and stare unmistakeably in the direction of the gifted mortal. Hint that he is consumptive. Suggest that he is expected to commit suicide shortly.

The talented Lady Fish, who for a year led the City fashions during the mayoralty of her brother, my Lord Finney, was often heard to assert that June was the proper month for showing poets in perfection. She ascribed this to

the warmth of the atmosphere, enabling them to dispense with the expense of firing and their consequent elation of animal spirits. She was the happy medium of ensuring luxury to a bright mind, the author of many works that ought to have been published. This is the story.

Alonzo Lee from his earliest childhood had revelled in the beautiful, and after business hours communed with Nature, seeking only the elevated, the good, and the great. His proud heart, sickened to loathing by the duplicity and baseness of man, turned in disgust from the busy throngs of the City, and sought for purity and love amid the flowery meads and cool grots of the agricultural districts, where he held a situation as second clerk to a cheese-and-bacon factor.

To gaze with fond eyes on the simple daisy and water it with his tears, to pour forth his impassioned soul over the king-cup and press it to his heart, was the chief enjoyment of his blameless spare time. "They at least do not deceive," he would affectionately exclaim, remembering perhaps some meanness either of the tyrant factor or his servile warehousemen; and

then, pulling forth his rhyming dictionary, he would compose a sonnet of exquisite beauty.

Before he had attained the age of twenty-three he had written upwards of thirty poems in praise of daisies, all of them different and set to popular tunes. He had vowed in his heart that he would also compose an equal number of verses in honor of the lovely king-cup, when an event happened which entirely disarranged the flow of his ideas, and by depriving him of his situation, obliged him to turn his thoughts to those vulgar necessities of life which have ever hampered the career of genius—need we mention a moderate supply of provisions and furnished lodgings.

Unfortunate Alonzo! in a moment of mental absence caused by an absurd, though enthusiastic, attempt to discover a rhyme to “silver,” he had omitted to enclose a receipted invoice to one of the first cheese firms in Derby, and had in its stead forwarded his last address to a daisy, a lovely thing, but entirely unbusiness-like, and highly unsatisfactory as an acknowledgment for a cash payment.

The head of the Derby cheese firm had a

daughter blessed with a mind of great vigour and originality of deep sentiment. She was herself an authoress of no mean powers, though her forte did not lie so much in extolling the beauties of the flowers of the field as in loving her fellow-beings, both male and female, or any article of furniture or wearing apparel which struck her as being poetically interesting through the sympathy she felt for the beloved friends who owned the property.

The instant she heard her revered parent narrate the romantic incident of the missing invoice, and the duly coming to hand of an Address to a Daisy, the earnest and gentle Miss Putian besought with tearful eyes that she might be favoured with a perusal of the unexpected effusion. From that moment the enraptured girl felt that her heart was another's. She recognized the thrill which, in superior temperaments, always accompanies the decrees of destiny.

Before she retired to rest on her virtuous couch, she that night, by the light of her chamber candle, composed and elegantly copied out,

free from corrections, a soothing address, remonstrating against the envious fate which had crushed the poet's soul and future prospects, and, brave beyond prudence, she the next day forwarded it to the warehouse of the tyrant bacon factor who, with more honesty than might have been expected from so harsh a nature, at once delivered it over to the astonished Alonzo Lee.

He, in his turn, now yielded up his soul to rapture. At length he was appreciated—a kindred mind had sympathized with his life-rending anguish; a distant heart had palpitated with admiring commiseration; the cord of soothing pity had vibrated.

He pressed to his lips the cherished writing, and observing at the end of the last stanza that the tender-hearted authoress had signed herself as Lilly P * * * he thus addressed the half-revealed name:—"Hear me, O Lilly P * * * Thus do I swear! Thou art, and shalt be mine, chaste maiden! My sheltering heart shall be thy home! With my purest aspirations will I feed thy love!"

That night the emotional Alonzo knew little sleep. He sat up far into the night inditing his poetic reply to his unknown admirer, in which—for the moon was shining—he often likened her to Luna's silvery ray illumining his poor cot, and he further bade her come to his arms and kiss his aching brow, a request which, as he unfortunately was not acquainted with the maiden's correct address, the fair Lilly was unable to comply with.

Years have rolled by, seasons have come and then gone again, the hot and the cold, the mild and the boisterous all in appointed order; quite correctly; days of grief and days of joy have ruled each for their allotted hours with punctuality, and the dead have been gathered in. The head of the Derby firm, the prosperous merchant for whom countless cows were made to deliver up their daily cheese, is now a decayed mouldy corse. His daughter, the amiable, tender-hearted Lilly Putian, has become wealthy beyond belief. Lovers gather round her and whisper admiration into the small ears where the diamond ear-

rings glitter, but they depart without the encouragement of even a slanting glance from the admired and courted heiress. She is staying during the fashionable London season with her esteemed friend, Lady Fish, and enjoying the princely hospitalities of the Mansion House. But turtle and venison have no charms for her, for she has never ceased to remember her cherished Alonzo—the unseen, yet beloved, the ideal man, the imaginary master mind of her day dreams!

And he, the poet, where is he? Scantily clothed in a suit once black, arrayed in a shirt once white, he still courts the muses in his windy garret, so poor that he gazes hungrily at the very sparrows twittering on the roofs. He is composing another poem to his worshipped Lilly P.—the spirit! the fairy of his heated fancy! the myth! His worn pen moistened with ink too often diluted to be much longer serviceable, traces his sublime thoughts on the coarse paper which had contained his last purchase of sugar. The promptings of his genius must for want of base gold, be recorded on grocer's wrappers.

A knock on the garret door, evidently administered by knuckles, demands admittance for the knocker. This is most strange! Who should care to visit the poor poet? Nevertheless, he opens to the summons. He receives a letter. He peruses it, and, like one transfixed, he gazes upon a bank note.

It is from his Lilly, the protecting, encouraging, hope-giving angel! She has, so she writes, observed some sweet lines in the *Halfpenny Journal*, and being most anxious to renew her acquaintance with the talented author, she has dared to disturb him in his privacy. She commands him to array himself in splendour, such as becomes a man of his attainments. Most delicately she hints that he may be short of ready money. He is, when arrayed in splendour, to hasten to the palace of London's Mayor and feast. He is to mingle with the great, the noble and the wealthy, and electrify them after dinner by the brilliance of his animated conversation. He is to be released from poverty and take his proud station in the world—that of a poet in easy circumstances.

Leaning with graceful confidence on the arm of her worshipping Alonzo (he, with wildness in his eye, but clad in garments which, though purchased very recently, impart to his form an air of the highest respectability; she, gazing upwards with love-looks and dressed in the richest fancy of fashion), they lounge through the splendid apartments of the Mansion House mingling their souls. "Yes, fairest lady," cries the poet, impetuously thrusting back his long hair with a bold comb-like action of his fingers, "yes, the choicest outpourings of my ghastliest soul-sighs have been breathed for this entrancing meeting; my sympathetic essence has ever encircled the hazy image of the ideal friend who illumined my dark death-thoughts; my palpitating heart has beat its quickest life-throbs when my busy brain has pondered over your loved yet ungazed on impersonation! As you once observed, fairest Lilly, in one of your most inspired pennings,

‘ To love, and yet not dare to speak,
O teach my pining heart to break!’

I have felt that dreadful agony, sweet one, in all its impassioned bitterness."

"Is it indeed so, Alonzo Lee?" she falteringly replies. "But had you no hope? O beautiful Hope, sustaining ether of the withering heart, spirit of the spiritless, strength of the strengthless, delicious Hope! Had you no hope, Alonzo Lee? Remember your own ennobling thought in your intoxicating poem on seeing a daisy crushed by a cart wheel—

'Relief, alas, I cannot give,
To broken stalk and bruised leaf,
And yet I know 'tis sweet to live,
No matter time how brief.'

Surely that inspiration might have sustained your wavering."

Had it not been for the abject poverty which had ever delayed the worldly progress of the talented Alonzo Lee, his union with his Lilly Putian would probably have met with little or no opposition, for his personal appearance since the purchase of his dress suit, was everything that the most fastidious opera check-taker could have desired; but it having transpired that the unfortunate poet was not only completely penniless, but also slightly indebted wherever he had been

able to obtain credit, the relations of the enamoured heiress offered a resistance almost malicious to the proposed alliance. Threats were held forth which, if carried out, would have inconvenienced Alonzo seriously, for his landlady was certainly empowered by law to seize the dress suit.

It was useless for the courageous, but gradually sinking Lilly, to refer with conscious pride to her gifted Alonzo's noble descent: hopelessly did she extol the heroic deeds of the celebrated De Lee who was executed by especial order, signed by his monarch, so far back as the reign of Henry the Eighth; it was in vain that with sparkling eye and head erect she related the thrilling adventures of the renowned Lee of Lee, who, with a drawn sword, perished—nothing could remove from the absent and abused lover the bitter reproach of hopeless pauperism and the absurd hope of his ever being able to better his horrible condition.

At this exciting moment the generous Lady Fish, a lady all heart, rushed to the rescue of the lovers. Her ladyship, despite her noble

station and aristocratic connections, had never been ashamed to confess that her grandfather had been one of our largest wholesale cheese merchants in Shoreditch; and it may therefore be easily imagined that her sympathies were entirely with this persecuted couple, who had also, in days past, been connected with the trade. At her suggestion the album of the heartbroken Lilly Putian was sent to the talented, though desponding, Alonzo, and on its variously tinted leaves he, by especial permission, penned several of his finest efforts. On an appointed day this album was returned to the fair owner, when her ladyship, as if by accident, cunningly intercepted its delivery, and having perused the newly added stanzas, pretended to be indignant at the overwarmth of the effusions and, creating a great confusion, instantly summoned a family meeting.

To this solemn conclave of uncles, aunts and cousins—all prosperous people—she read aloud the outpourings of the gifted Alonzo Lee. Horror was visible on every countenance, and three cousins could not be restrained—even by the presence of ladies—from using coarse language.

One sweet poem commenced with these heated words, "What! hast thou kissed me thirty times;" another began with this impassioned line, "Cling to my bosom, trembling bride, thy arms around my neck;" a third opened with the following affectionate confession, "My cheek on thine, I drink thy breath."

The poetic high pressure of these startling statements shocked and alarmed the family. An aged uncle, overcome with emotion, demanded in piercing accents that his stick should be placed in his trembling hands; and the first impulse of the aunts was to prosecute the starving and slandering poet for libel. But on being informed that the sweet Lilly, feeling that in a week or two she must certainly go mad, had determined on instantly making her will, and leaving all her wealth to her adored, though by them despised, suitor; and on being further threatened that in the event of further opposition, the penniless Alonzo had declared that for vital reasons he should be forced to publish the obnoxious love verses in the *Halfpenny Journal*, the sternness of the relatives relaxed, and encouraged by the

generous outspeakings of Lady Fish, an unwilling consent was, after a ten hours' debate, wrung from the enraged assembly.

On the day when the now radiant Alonzo Lee led to the altar the recovered and sweetly smiling Lilly Putian, she wore amid the orange blossoms that encircled her devoted head, a small bunch of daisies. No sooner was the poet aware of that sweet and thoughtful compliment to his earliest masterpieces, than he was remarked to tremble and his lip quivered; but speedily recovering his self-command he, with a giant effort, 'murmured, "Delicious, but unexpected!" and then advanced boldly to the altar, and bowed three times to the officiating minister.

Their first child was christened "Daisy." Alonzo has never written a line since he has been comfortable.

JULY.

THERE is a sight in London, to be seen every day if you like, such as no other city in the

world can equal ; a sight which (when we have sufficiently recovered our self-possession and elasticity of mind) fills us with a delicious glow of patriotic enthusiasm. Life is so short, we could not for many days together afford to miss this sight ; it seems like a wicked wasting of comfort to refuse the enjoyment.

On a fine bright July day, when the small white clouds are floating lazily through the blue sky and the sun-baked sparrows are taking their baths in the puddles left by the watering-carts, when the dogs are lapping from the cabstand buckets, and you envy the enjoyment of the lucky being who could catch a cold, or buy a cold, or even take a chill in such a red-hot atmosphere, walk abroad in the parks, or saunter down Regent Street, or, better still, sit under the shade of the broad-spreading trees in Kensington Gardens, and in sheer gratitude for eyesight vow twopence for every blind man you may meet for a month to come.

For you shall behold such a show of beautiful women that if you have in your heart but the smallest grain of patriotism—the mere vulgar

roast beef and plum-pudding love of country—you will slap your chest proudly and thank Heaven you were born an Englishman.

They advance upon you from all sides, these lovely faces, and in such numbers that, whilst you stare in wonder at one of them, twenty of equal loveliness escape unadmired. You begin to wish that no foreigners were permitted in England, or that a prohibitive export duty would restrict all the girls to home and colonial matrimony. The notion that they will some day get married is in itself a painful trial.

Somebody—the rogue—will some day be lord and master over that lily face with the large eyes that glow with a violet light ; somebody—the villain—will, with Ma and Pa's consent, be stuttering his love nonsense to that golden hair and causing that fairy form to tremble with delight. Every one of these adorable creatures must, sooner or later, be led into captivity and sew on somebody's shirt-buttons. It is enough to make any man, even though he has but sufficient poetry in his soul to like truffles, turn monk and forswear orange-flowers, to watch this army of

angels parading before you in all the insolence of conquering beauty, their bonnet-strings fluttering like the banners of the victorious, their gay parasols turned against you like shields, all swaddled in lace and rustling in silk or soft and crushable in muslin; to see them pass and re-pass, while you calmly endure every pang of envy, and then, perhaps, are doomed to return home and eat a mutton-chop—a mutton-chop!

In Kensington Gardens may also be seen the handsomest trees and the most insignificant palace in England. The trees are magnificent fellows, with trunks as big round as water-butts, and branches so tall that a crow perched on them looks no larger than a wren. But the poor palace, in its British uniform of brick red, slashed with white stone “dressings,” has the pompous melancholy look about it of a court favourite out of luck, as though it were mourning in sullen pride its desertion by royalty.

The much-to-be-pitied building began its architectural existence as the comfortable man-

sion of Sir Heneage Finch, a Speaker of the House of Commons. It had the satisfaction of seeing its owner raised to the peerage as the Earl of Nottingham. Subsequently it had the high honour conferred upon it of being promoted by William III. to the dignity of palace, and many a bouncing prince and chubby princess has it had the glory of sheltering within its vermillion walls.

Now, alas ! it has sunk down to the degraded position of alms-house for destitute nobility, where some of the best blood in the land are enabled, by gratuitous lodging, lighting, and firing, to drag out a pinched existence on a couple of thousands a-year.

One hundred and fifty years ago there were no fashionable promenades in Kensington Gardens. How society got on without them appears to us—all votaries of fashion—marvellous. The beautiful gravel walks, shaded by arching trees, where ladies and gentlemen who lunch at four, indulge in an hour's stroll to enable them to make a hearty dinner at eight, were then nothing more than common grass land, very excellent

and proper for sheep and cows, but quite unfitted for the enjoyment of the higher orders of the animal creation, who wear

“The silken petticoat and brodered vest.”

Shortly after his accession to the throne, William III. purchased from Daniel, second Earl of Nottingham, his house and grounds at Kensington. We are told by Evelyn that even after the alterations the building had a patched appearance; “but with the gardens, however, it is a very neat villa, having to it the park, and a straight new way through this park.” The King, who was of a contented disposition, was delighted with his little property of twenty-six acres. He called in the gardeners, and soon had the grounds laid out in long, narrow gravel walks, with neat box edgings like frills on each side of them; he had the square and round beds of tulips fitted into the open space as exactly as compasses and rules could do it, and caused the hedges to be clipped as square as stone-work, and the yew trees to be sculptured into pyramids and globes. It was in this Dutch garden that he

and Peter the Great, who was then in England studying shipbuilding, used to walk round and round, the one to cool his head after taking too much Hollands, the other to prepare himself for a fresh bumper of brandy and cayenne pepper.

There is a very pleasing anecdote told of William III., whilst residing at Kensington Palace, which, though not strictly belonging to its history, is interesting as a proof of the amiability of the Dutch King. One day, whilst busy with his Secretary on state affairs, a tap was heard at his closet door.

"Who is there?" asked the King.

"Lord Buck," answered a childish voice. It was Lord Buckhurst, then only four years of age, the son of the Earl of Dorset, his Majesty's Lord High Chamberlain.

"And what does Lord Buck want?" returned the King, opening the door.

"I want you to play at coach and horses. I wanted you a long time," said the little fellow. The stern, heavy countenance of the King relaxed into a smile, which it seldom wore.

Leaving his state affairs, he took the string of the toy in his hand, and dragged it up and down the long gallery until his little playfellow was satisfied.

During the reign of Queen Anne, thirty more acres were taken from Hyde Park, and added to Kensington Gardens. Her Majesty was so determined to surround the palace with shrubs and flowers, that she set one hundred men to work making flower-beds, and arranging "a noble collection of foreign plants," and "fine neat greens," as Bow Jack called them. She also built "a stately green-house," and filled up some of the gravel-pits, turning, as Addison wrote in the "Spectator," "an unsightly hollow" into "an uncommon and agreeable scene; for on one side of the walk you see this hollow basin, with its several little plantations, lying so conveniently under the eye of the beholder; on the other side of it there appears a seeming mound made up of trees, one higher than another, as they approach the centre."

These gravel-pits, which have now entirely disappeared, formerly extended the whole length

of the gardens on the Bayswater and Notting Hill sides. Shortly after William III. had purchased his little estate, physicians suddenly discovered that the air of the gravel-pits was the finest in the world. We suppose the presence of the King must have affected the atmosphere, warming it like a sun, for the most expensive medical authorities of the day sent their fashionable patients to the place, which, despite the smoke of London, they declared to be infinitely more salubrious than Essex and Kent put together.


Caroline, Queen of George II., was fond of large gardens, and did not like to be cramped up in a little spot of some sixty acres, so she ordered another slice to be taken from Hyde Park, and added three hundred acres to the Kensington grounds. In this reign the Serpentine was made, by digging a canal along the line of ponds in Hyde Park, and throwing them into one. The excavation was four hundred yards in length, and forty feet deep; and, with the soil dug out, a mound was raised and planted with evergreens, and on the summit was erected a small temple, made to turn at pleasure to any

point of the compass so as to afford shelter from the wind.

Since the death of George II., Kensington Gardens and Hyde Park have undergone no changes of consequence beyond those produced by cultivation. The artificial mound has been levelled, the turn-about temple cleared away and shot somewhere else as rubbish, and a new bridge, with a perpetually dry waterfall, erected at one end of the Serpentine. George III. never lived in the palace, for he was too "unwell" to have any tastes at all, beyond those which belong to gentlemen in a weak state of mind : such as sitting still for hours together, or eating ravenous dinners.

George IV., whose fancy partook a little too much of the linen-draper's idea of the beautiful, preferred building for himself ginger-bread pavilions or chaste stucco residences, to taking up his abode in the old mansion at Kensington. So he placed the palace at the disposal of his royal brothers ; and, whilst the Duke of Sussex used it as his town residence, the Duke of York made it his home.

It was in this old Palace that Queen Victoria was born. Mr. Wilberforce, writing to his friend Hannah More, says: "In consequence of a very civil message from the Duchess of Kent, I waited on her this morning. She received me with her fine animated child on the floor by her side, with its playthings, of which I soon became one. She was very civil; but, as she did not sit down, I did not think it right to stay above a quarter of an hour; and, there being but a female attendant and a footman present, I could not well get up any topic so as to carry on a continued discourse. She apologised for not speaking English well enough to talk it, but intimated a hope that she might talk it better and longer with me at some future time. She spoke of her situation, and her manner was quite delightful." If the reverend gentleman could only have foreseen that the "fine animated child on the floor" was to have been the future Queen of England, we think the "very civil message" would have been written "gracious command," and the "manner quite delightful" have been changed into "the greatest condescension."



It is only since the reign of William III. that Kensington Gardens may be said to have a separate history. Before that period it formed a portion of Hyde Park ; so that we are forced to mix the two up together in writing on the subject.

In Cromwell's time, the park was a large open field, where court races, hurling matches, May-dances, and reviews were held. During the civil war, Essex and Lambert encamped their forces on the same ground where the boys now fly their kites, and the Protector reviewed his psalm-singing Ironsides where the London youths now so pleasingly stroll about smoking their abominable Sunday cigars.

It was here, too, that, on the 1st of May, the gentry used to go dew-gathering, and wash their faces with the moisture on the grass to preserve their beauty. In the time of the Commonwealth, these practices gave great offence to the righteous rulers of the land. In the "Proceedings of State Affairs," under the date of Monday, 1st of May, 1654, we read :—"This day was more observed by people going a-Maying than for divers years

past, and indeed much sin committed by wicked meetings with fiddlers, drunkenness, ribaldry, and the like; great resort came to Hyde Park, many hundreds of coaches and gallants in attire, but most shameful powdered-hair men and painted and spotted women. Some men played with a silver ball, and some took other recreation." The "most shameful powder" and the "painted and spotted women," which seem to draw forth the virtuous disgust of the Puritan chronicler, had just then become fashionable, having been but lately introduced from France.

Pepys has the following melancholy passage in his "Diary," on the evening of the 30th of April, 1661:—"I am sorry I am not at London, to be in Hyde Park to-morrow morning, among the great gallants and ladies, which will be very fine." To show what the nobility-hunting old prig missed, Evelyn was good enough to notice the very same day in his "Diary":—"I went to Hyde Park to take the air, where was his Majesty and an innumerable appearance of gallants and rich coaches, being now a time of universal festivity and joy."

From what we read, Hyde Park would seem to have been the Copenhagen Fields of the time, for sporting matches came off there, such as coach and foot races, hurling, and wrestling. In the "Moderate Intelligencer" we find that there was "a hurling of a great ball by fifty Cornish gentlemen of the one side, and fifty of the other; one party played in red caps, and the other in white;" and that there were present "his Highness the Lord Protector, many of his privy council, and divers eminent gentlemen, to whose view was presented great agility of body, and most neat and exquisite wrestling at every meeting of one with the other, which was ordered with such dexterity, that it was to show more the strength, vigour, and nimbleness of their bodies than to endanger their persons. The ball they played withal was silver, and designed for that party which did win the goal."

Those gentlemen who now-a-days walk their horses by the side of the Serpentine, bending over to talk to the lovely young ladies in the carriages, must be rather surprised when they read in "Evelyn" that he "went to see a coach-

race in Hyde Park." How disgusted they would be if the days of Pepys were to be revived, when he wrote—"To Hyde Park by coach, and saw a fine foot race three times round the park, between an Irishman and Joseph Crow, that was once my Lord Claypole's footman."


It was in this Hyde Park racing-ground that "his Highness the Lord Protector" met with an accident which might have cost him his life. Ludlow tells us "that the Duke of Holstein made him (Cromwell) a present of a set of grey Friesland coach-horses, with which, taking the air in the park attended only by his secretary Thurlow, he would needs take the place of the coachman, not doubting but the three pairs of horses he was about to drive would prove as tame as the three nations that were ridden by him, and therefore, not content with their ordinary pace, he lashed them very furiously. But they, unaccustomed to such a rough driver, ran away in a rage, and stopped not till they had thrown him out of the box, by which fall his pistol fired in his pocket, though without any hurt to himself; by which he might have been instructed how

dangerous it was to meddle with those things wherein he had no experience."

It may be as well to state that Ludlow's political opinions were opposed to the Protector, and that no doubt his account was written many years later than the rule of the thrown coachman.

During the time of the Commonwealth, Hyde Park was sold "for ready money required by the State." It was divided into three lots. The sum realised was £17,069 6s. 8d.; the wood on it, "exclusive of the deer and building materials," being valued at £5,099 19s. 6d. Three gentlemen of the names of Wilcox, Tracy, and Deane, became the proprietors, and immediately afterwards a toll appears to have been levied upon all coaches which entered the park.

Evelyn complains of this innovation upon the fashionable purse. "I went to take the aire in Hide Park, where every coach was made to pay a shilling and horse sixpence by *the sordid fellow* (Mr. Anthony Deane, of St. Martins-in-the-Fields, Esq.) who had purchased it of the State as they are called." After the Restoration, the property was repurchased by Government.




Although Hyde Park seems quiet enough in the present day, yet it is not many years since its loneliness made it a favourite duelling-ground. It was here that Wilkes received a severe pistol wound, and it was here also that the desperate duel between the Duke of Hamilton and Lord Mohun was fought, in which both the principals fell, and the seconds, taking up the quarrel, had, poor simpletons, the pleasure of obtaining satisfaction for a dispute they had nothing to do with, by wounding each other.

Swift, in his "Journal to Stella," tells us that, after this "four-handed fight," "the Duke was helped towards the cake-house by the ring in Hyde Park, where they fought, and died on the grass before he could reach the house."

But the loneliness of the park was not only favourable for the adjustment of quarrels, but also became the hunting-ground for footpads and highway robbers. We should laugh at the fears of a gentleman who would now be afraid of making a short cut at night across the park, without having first concealed his watch and studs in his Wellington boots; but, in 1752, there was great

danger of having a pistol placed between your eyes, and hearing, "Your money or your life!" before you could hurry over the ground between Knightsbridge and Bayswater.

In the trial of William Belcher, sentenced to death for a highway robbery, we are told that the chaise of the Devizes had been robbed two or three times in the road, "along Hyde Park." The officer who seized the robber gave the following evidence: "As we came near the house (half-way between Knightsbridge and Kensington), the prisoner came to us on foot, and said to us: 'Driver, stop!' He held a pistol tinder-box to the chaise, and said: 'Your money directly: you must not stay this minute—your money.' I said: 'Don't frighten us; I have but a trifle; you shall have it.' Then I said to the gentlemen (there were three in the chaise): 'Give your money;' I took out a pistol from my coat pocket, and from my breeches pocket a five-shilling piece and a dollar. I held the pistol concealed in one hand, and the money in the other. I held the money pretty hard; he said: 'Put it in my hat.' I let him take the five-shilling piece out of my



hand; as soon as he had taken it, I snapped my pistol at him; it did not go off; he staggered back, and held up his hands, and said: 'Oh Lord! Oh Lord!' I jumped out of the chaise; he ran away, and I after him about six or seven hundred yards, and there took him. I hit him a blow on his back; he begged for mercy on his knees. I took his neckcloth off, and tied his hands with it, and brought him back to the chaise."

Hyde Park has, since the days of Charles II., always been celebrated for its reviews, and as being the fashionable exercising-ground. Evelyn records several instances of the mustering of troops and reviews by the King. In 1664, his Majesty's guards, "being of horse and foot, 4,000," were marched and ordered and drawn up in battalia, before their Majesties, in Hyde Park."

The prudent Pepys also has entered in his diary the following passage: "From the King's Head ordinary, with Creed, to hire a coach to carry us to Hyde Park to-day, there being a general muster of the King's guards, horse and foot; but they demand so high that I, spying Mr.

Cutler, the merchant, did take notice of him, and he, going into his coach and telling me he was going to the muster, I asked and went along with him; when—a goodly sight to see—so many fine horses and officers, the King, Duke, and others came by a-horseback, and the two queenens, in the Queen-mother's coach (my Lady Castlemaine not being there); and, after long being there, I light and walk to the place where the King, Duke, &c., did stand, to see the horse and foot march by and discharge their guns, to show a Frenche Marquisse (for whom this muster was caused) the goodnesse of our firemen, which, indeed, was very good, though not without a slip now and then; and the one broadside close to our coach, as we had going out of the Parke, even to the nearnesse to be ready to burn our hairs."

In Horace Walpole's time, the militia were frequently reviewed on the same ground where our gallant troops from the Crimea were inspected on their return to England. "The crowds in Hyde Park when the King reviewed the militia were inimaginable. My Lord Orford, their colonel, I hear, looked ferociously martial

and genteel, and I believe it; his person and air have a noble wildness in them; the regimentals, too, were very becoming—scarlet faced with black, buff waistcoat, and gold buttons. How knights of the shire, who had never shot anything but woodcocks, like this warfare I don't know, but the towns through which they pass adore them. Everywhere they are treated and regaled."

During Lord George Gordon's riots, the troops were encamped in Hyde Park; and in 1799 the Volunteers also pitched their tents on the public property.

In less warlike times, the Ring became the resort of fashionable horsemen and "carriage people." Evelyn more than once notes a visit to Hyde Park, "where was his Majesty and abundance of gallantry;" and the mean but frisky Pepys has frequent entries, such as: "After dinner, to Hide Parke. At the Parke was the King and in another coach my lady Castlemaine; they greeted each other at every turn;" or when he, too, joined the fashionable throng of horsemen: "To St. James's Park, and

in the Park Mr. Coventry's people having a horse ready for me (so fine a one that I was almost afraid to get upon him, but I did, and found myself more feared than hurt) and followed the Duke and some of his people to Hyde Park."

We have before said that Kensington Gardens became a fashionable promenade in the days of George I.

Then the Court ladies, after their early dinner, took the air, their heads and faces adorned with powder, paint, and patches; the gallants, in their long silk waistcoats and gold embroidered coats, kept at a respectful distance by the immense hoops that puffed out the petticoats of the fair promenaders.

Leigh Hunt goes into ecstasies when describing the additional beauties which the hoop added to the female figure. "When it was large, and the swell of it hung at a proper distance from the person, it became not an habiliment but an enclosure. The person stood aloof from it, and was imagined to do so. The lady, like a goddess, was half concealed in an hemisphere out of which the rest of her person rose like Venus out of the

billows. When she moved, and the hoop was at proper length as well as breadth, she did not walk—her steps were not visible—she was borne along; she was wafted; came gliding.” How immeasurably superior is the crinoline!

Thomson, in his juvenile days, was also seized with this madness for the hoop. He writes:—

“ One thing I mind—a spreading hoop she wore,
Than nothing which adorns a lady more;
With equal rage could I its beauties sing—
I’d with a hoop make all Parnassus ring.”

It is curious to follow the progress of fashion up to the present. As the hoops went out, the ladies who moved along the broad walks of Kensington Gardens carried on their hips little panniers, and wore head-dresses built of paste-board and adorned with flowers and feathers, whilst the gentlemen who escorted them at one time wore clothing cumbrous and heavy as a state coachman’s livery, and, a few years afterwards, made their appearance in minikin hats, large pigtails, and tight-fitting clothes of striped colours.

As news came from Paris, tailors and milliners were set to work to carry out the newly-received

notions of what was beautiful in dress. Then came turbans and ostrich-feathers, and gowns with the waist under the arms, so that the bosom, as we are told, "protruded at the top as if squeezed out by the girdle-strings." The men "cut" their pigtails and took to high-waisted coats and tight pantaloons, such as we see in Gilray's caricatures.

What kind of costume it may please our children's children to adopt, it is as difficult to picture to ourselves as it was to Lucullus to invent another dish. We think we ought to remain contented with the fashion as it is, for what can be more delightful than to witness the toilettes of the exquisite crowd that assembles in Kensington Gardens when the band is playing? Bonnets so light that you could blow them away as easily as so much thistledown; dresses made aërial by rows of flounces; feet that peep out from under the embroidered petticoat, so small that a Chinese might envy them, all prove the intense labour that has been expended to arrive at this perfection of attire.

As the band plays the choice *morceaux* from

the last new opera, the prim multitude, seated on the benches and chairs around, listen with a silence that even the waving of the trees cannot break, and in the beauty of the melody forget that the thermometer is at 99° in the shade. If anybody has courage enough to walk through those rows of listeners, he will see a sight—amber-coloured locks that fall with an elastic grace upon the sloping shoulder, eyes so large and blue that they seem to reflect the sky above, and mouths that a grape could scarcely enter, surrounded by lips red as holly-berries at Christmas time.

Here are mammas watching over their lambs with a restless vigilance, turning this way and that as the gentlemen pass and re-pass their daughters. There are three or four young ladies clustered around "papa" (who, overcome by the heat and the music, is half dozing in his chair), all armed with parasols, which fall down like shields, if any "fellow" should stare too intently.

Now you pass some dark-haired beauty, with a broad plait surmounting the wide forehead like

a coronet, and the edge of the bonnet marked by a wreath of violets; or you steal a glance at a delicately-formed girl, with brown locks drawn back from the blue-veined temples, and little hooks of curls resting crisply against the cheek.

Whilst the band plays, some of the beauties fan themselves with their lace-edged handkerchiefs, shaking out the perfume with each movement. Others seem busy with the thoughts the music calls up, and stare vacantly before them; a few, with their admirers beside them, or leaning over the backs of their chairs, listen to whispers that are being addressed to them, too oppressed by the heat to make long answers, but occasionally—perhaps to show the brilliant teeth that for a moment form an edging to the lips—rewarding with a faint smile the “anxious endeavours to please” of their wonderfully got-up cavaliers.

When we were young we did skip, and a dress-coat lasted but for a season. Polished leather boots consumed our substance. We revelled in

choice shirts, with bosoms of exceeding fine work, and for white kid gloves we risked insolvency. Now, alas! the swallow-tails of a thousand polkas lie undisturbed in our wardrobe, and our opera waistcoat is older than our firstborn. The oil of youth, that lubricated the activity of our pas seul, has clogged in our joints, and, reclining in our easy-chair, we listen to the tales of the dancers. We are getting old and lazy. Grey streaks, like the ghosts of departed vigour, haunt the ruined blackness of our hair, and, with the groan of a conquered warrior, we lay down our tweezers. Oh, that our time could but come over again, when the exertion of pleasure caused us no distress, and to put on fine clothes was our greatest enjoyment!

In those days when we could return from business at six, and be dressed like a little king and ready for the opera by seven (our mutton chops, in a kind of crop, pressing sorely against the second button of our waistcoat), we considered any man over forty "an old boy," and inwardly decided that he had no right to be got up and pomaded into the semblance of a youngster.

Now, we loudly assert that no man is in his prime until he is fifty-five. But it will not do.

The rebels of twenty-five wink to one another, and quietly put us down.

Then we fancied it was a waste of time to focus our glasses on a face passed twenty-five, and if we offered our arm to a spinster of thirty we consoled ourself with the reflection that we were assisting old age. Our song is now altered. We have adopted the consoling creed of Balzac, that a woman is never so lovely as in her fortieth year.

The bits of things in their teens we smile upon as sweet children. Have we gained or lost wisdom?

Then we were in our pride, now we are on our self-defence. It is the sense of the prisoner who decorates his cell that prompts us to glorify the wrinkles that bar out our youth and teaches us to seek comfort in what we are forced to endure.

There are several very mortifying, we may say humiliating, circumstances attending the middle age of one who is fool enough to be ashamed of

his years: one is the coldness openly displayed by the youth whose companion you would wish to be considered, and another the insulting triumph with which the acknowledged old ones welcome you among their ranks, and the glee with which they proclaim you as one of them.

We approach a happy group of giggling things and long to join in their fun, but suddenly they are silent and retire abashed. We turn to the ottoman where the aged are resting, and instantly room is made for us, and a voice exclaims "We old people are better out of the way of those silly children. We have seen our day, and may as well let them enjoy theirs." Maternal parents will openly insult you by placing the greatest confidence in what they term "your calmed nature," by intrusting their sweet progeny to your care, and not even suspecting you of tender emotions.

When giddy Julia, a bright little angel of fascinating impudence, who knows how to use her eyes, and would (for practice) flirt with a gravedigger,—when laughing Julia has to be guarded in the crush-room until the carriage is an-

nounced,—mamma asks you to enact the sage protector, and poor Tom Darling is balked of his hopes.

The cunning mother knows as well as we do that if we were to pour out our soul in one long song of love, Julia would glance at our increasing forehead and tufted sidelocks and laugh; but were Tom to breathe but six words of affection the minx would remember them for a week and believe them all the time. Decidedly we are a safer escort than Tom; but we had rather it had been considered otherwise, and that our pepper-and-salt head, or, let us say, our somewhat grizzled locks, were thought to be as lovely as his glossy curls.

It is easy to tell when a man is casting off his worn-out youth. He betrays himself by gross indulgences. At dinner-parties he eats too much, and likes to linger over the port until it is time to go home; but the boys talk much and devour little, and as soon as the piano is heard in the drawing-room above they sidle off to the door, leaving their full glasses behind.

Should dancing be proposed, the oldster tries to get up a rubber.

When any dear, obliging creature kindly consents to sing, the old one, instead of volunteering to turn over the music, creeps into a shady corner and steals forty winks. His waistcoat, though larger than of old, yet seems tighter ; or should he be of a lean and ungrateful constitution, he delights in arguments on sluggish digestions and the efficacy of pills.

When he indulges in a frisk, as at Christmas time, his wheezing becomes oppressive, or every now and then a sudden twinge of the rheumatism causes him to grimace. If any young fellow should wound his feelings by personal allusions, he will pettishly sneer at the impudence of "boys;" but, on the other hand, he considers it an act of intolerable impertinence if any of his juvenile friends should presume to address him as "old cock."

Sometimes you may observe two of these tired-looking done-up bucks, examining with lively curiosity each other's highly-brushed hair, or peeping with sharp eyes for the grey roots of the

.

glossy whiskers. Each is wondering where the other goes to be dyed.

Occasionally they betray themselves by anecdotes of Pasta and John Kemble, and, whilst the listeners are amazed that any one with such beautiful teeth and jet-black locks could have lived in those far-off days, the detected beau will suddenly discover his mistake and flounder out of his blunder by offering to "lend the book where he read it."

Above all, anybody at a glance may distinguish around the eyes of these renovated boys those thin cracks in the human clay called wrinkles—minute lines that tell of the hard wear of the vessel where the glazing of youth has given way.

A cruel infliction on the young bachelor of forty is to have a married sister who is a truth-telling woman, and who will openly confess her age and relate anecdotes of her young brother's naughty boyhood. He could break the poker in two with rage when she (before girls too) begins the love stories of the angels he courted; of the romantic attachment he formed, from mere description, for dearest Anna, a schoolfellow (now the mother

of six) ; how he proposed three times to Caroline, who refused him because she liked officers (since twice married) ; how he wanted Kate to elope with him, only she was afraid to jump. The once entrancing Kate now wears a cap, sips brandy-and-water before bed-time, and, years since, lost her waist.

If we chose to mention names, we could refer admirers of beauty to a young lady so superlatively handsome that to gaze on her bewitching countenance was to destroy a week's appetite.

Naturally, her parents doated upon her, and, indeed, spoiled her with indulgences, and blessed her sweet face as they paid the bills.

The son of a highly respectable nobleman fell so desperately in love with this angel that he walked before the house for three weeks, and with impassioned gesticulations offered marriage whenever anybody peeped over the parlour blinds.

There was a grace about the deportment of Clarissa which, but for its sublimity, might be likened to the movements of a sportive kitten, a rounded grace so inimitable that all her companions affected her style.

Her mother had been a fine creature and a favourite toast. Even now she wears a settled calmness of beauty which, in a widow, would command speedy matrimony. When aroused the expression of her eye might conquer the sternest of footmen and make him abject.

On the occasion of the divine Clarissa making her first appearance in ball-room life, an old boy who had twice tenderly addressed her respected mamma (when Miss G.) was seized with a sudden trembling, and declared that he experienced all the torments of his disappointed love, so closely did the child resemble the parent. During that same evening a member of Parliament was so affected that, rushing down to the house, he voted on the wrong side and forfeited all his future electioneering prospects.

A Baronet with twelve thousand a year offered to wager five monkeys that in less than three months she should be his; but four brave men, disgusted with this display of effrontery, instantly stepped forward and accepted the bet, at the same time presenting the noble upstart with their cards and challenging him to mortal

combat unless he instantly withdrew his offensive remarks.

The family is excessively well-to-do, and the liveries are handsome. As an old friend (forty !) of the family, we are permitted to call whilst the first dinner bell is ringing. We carve chickens with a magical neatness, and as a professor of salad-mixing we simply defy the world.

Clarissa is engaged in matrimonial promise to a gentleman of fortune, who never can be worthy of such excellence. Her chief delight is to sit in an opera-box, and, as the lovely music calms her agitated soul, to listen to the love-vows of her favoured selection.

On these opera nights we delight in calling on that cherished family. They have dined early (six instead of eight), to suit the pleasure-seekers. We find them partaking of tea—a wholesome beverage. Everybody is disturbed and anxious—the mother, lest her sweet daughter should be late; the children, from jealousy that they are not to share the pleasure.

It is an uncomfortable visit; but we know that our reward is at hand. Brother Oscar is ready

dressed, and has stretched his gloves. Compared with the other members of the family, he in his extensive get-up stands out as a highly finished specimen : not a hair out of place, and his general cleanliness amounting to frigidity. He will not speak to Athol or Edwin, but stands before the glass gazing on himself, his reflection being his only fitting companion. He grumbles and looks at his watch, and wonders what Clarissa can be about.

Presently a general rustling is heard, gradually increasing to a rushing, crackling roar, which informs us that the capacious crinoline of the beautiful Clarissa is rapidly descending from above, stretching voluminously from wall to rail, and filling up in a cloud of richness more than six feet of staircase.

Everybody gazes at the door : our impatience becomes almost beyond control. The fond mother rises, the children run forward, we adjust our eyeglass, and utter an inward prayer for help. She comes !

She floats into our presence. She curtsseys to us with an elegance which sends the blood to

our head. As if in mercy, she recalls us to our senses by exclaiming, in her sweetest tones, "Ma, dear, I want a pin."

By her side little Marian stands, envious of her sister's pretty gown, and wishing she were old enough to be dressed as finely. In about ten years' time it will be her turn to be courted and petted, and set the milliners to work. She will, we consider, be even more captivating than the beautiful Clarissa.

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